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Strategic communication and identity construction in organisations: Different perspectives

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1. Introduction

This special issue of the journal *Globe: A Journal of Language, Culture and Communication* is devoted to articles based on selected papers that were presented at the 1st International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Discourse and Communication in Professional Contexts[1] with the title "Organizational Communication – from Academic and Practical Perspectives" held on 18–21 August 2015 at Aalborg University, Denmark, and hosted by the Department of Culture and Global Studies. This volume also contains relevant articles by researchers from outside the conference which thematically fit within the same frame as the conference – namely, discourse and communication in professional contexts.

In an increasingly complex world where groups with different interests and expectations are contesting dominant discourses, the adaptation of organisational communication constitutes a strategic, linguistic and communicative challenge. While previously the primary concern of organisations would have been to communicate with a clearly defined and relatively small number of stakeholder groups (e.g. customers, investors, suppliers and employees) about issues that relate to the financial and commercial aspects of the business, organisations are now required to address and communicate with a much more diverse set of stakeholders about matters that involve social and environmental change from local as well as global perspectives.

In part, this development has arisen from the increasingly global nature of business and its concomitant imprint on natural and social environments across the world. However, the increased public awareness of the contestability of professional and expert knowledge has also led to intensified interaction among professionals and non-professionals, among other things as a result of new web based possibilities of making one's voice heard. In this environment, communication becomes less predictable and less controllable, requiring that organisations adopt new modes of interaction. As an example, in recent years this has included focus on more dialogic forms of communication and the recognition of multiple and potentially conflicting identities among stakeholder groups (AAU 2015).

In this introductory article, we have chosen to focus on some central elements that the papers in this issue have in common, such as strategic communication in advertising and identity construction and communication. Furthermore, a short presentation of each article in this issue follows in the last part of the present article.

2. Strategic communication and advertising

An organisation, be it private or public, needs ways to achieve its organisational goals. A modern organisation can no longer be certain that its customers will buy or keep buying its products and services. Nor can it be sure that investors will keep investing or that all kinds of different social actors will not interfere in its actions. On the contrary, the organisation often faces severe difficulties in securing these interventions. In order to make its business goals come true, the organisation has to participate in a complex relationship with all its stakeholders, in which the act of performing *strategic communication* becomes pivotal for its survival.

1 This was the first conference in a planned series of conferences that is to take place biennially; the next conference will take place in Aberdeen in 2017.

One of the subjects discussed in this volume is *strategic communication*. Current marketing communication operates in an environment of saturation by product messages where consumers are becoming immune to what the organization is trying to tell them. The amount of communication options makes it difficult for advertisers to choose the most appropriate. Within this context, keeping the strategic consistency of all messages among different elements of marketing communication it is very important to ensure a consistent brand image that will appeal to the consumers. This strategic consistency may be one of the most recommended approaches for developing integrated marketing communication. Strategic consistency refers to the extent to which information conveyed by different communication options share meaning (Kjeller 2001, cited in Navarro et al. 2009). Kjeller (2001) states that communication tools are strategically consistent if the information they convey share meaning and content with the purpose of sending and reinforcing common brand associations.

The term *strategic* is often associated with practice and the tactics used to implement strategy (Mintzberg 1990). The concept of *strategic communication* was originally used in military theory and international relations (Stenberg 2012). The term *strategic communication* is constituted by two key words that are particularly significant. The words indicate that the activities are not random and unintentional communications. Furthermore, they indicate that there is an inherent plan behind these activities as the word s*trategy* is often related to the achievement of a goal. The term is derived from the Greek word for generalship or leading an army. In Merriam-Websters online dictionary *strategy* is defined as: “The art and science of planning and marshaling resources for their most efficient and effective use”. The second definition of the term in Merriam-Websters online dictionary is related to wars and armies: “the science and art of military command exercised to meet the enemy in combat under advantageous conditions”. In *strategic communication* the third definition is applied: “A method or plan chosen to bring about a desired future, such as achievement of a goal or solution to a problem”.

In today's increasingly complex world, all organisations (used in the broadest sense of the word, referring to corporations, for-profit and nonprofit organisations, activist groups, nongovernmental organisations, organisations promoting various forms of social change, political parties or movements, and government organisations) compete in order to achieve the attention, affinity and admiration of their stakeholders: customers, employees, investors, donors, special interest groups, media and the public. This can clearly be seen from some of the articles in this issue e.g. Balfaqeeh's article on the banking in the United Arab Emirates, Winkler & Zerfass' article on key concepts in communication, Kedves' article on online crowdfunding and Baillargeon's article on marketing communication and advertising. Although organisations' activities can be conceptualized in various ways they all involve the organisation that needs to communicate purposefully to advance its mission. This is the essence of *strategic communication* which implies that people will be engaged in deliberate communication (Hallahan et al. 2007: 3-35).

According to Falkheimer and Heide (2014) *strategic communication* is a transboundary concept that captures, better than public relation does, the complex phenomenon of an organisation's targeted communication processes. Furthermore they argue that *strategic communication* is a “conceptual and holistic framework that is more valid and relevant than public relations” integrating different fields of goal-oriented communication and using a multidisciplinary and management approach. (Falkheimer & Heide 2014: 124, 126). They define *strategic communication* as: “An organisation's conscious communication efforts to reach its goal. In the broadest possible sense of the term, organisation in this context refers to private companies, public authorities and organisations, associations and interest groups” (Falkheimer & Heide 2014: 132).

Corporate communication and *strategic communication* have very much in common. While corporate communication has its origin in the management and marketing fields, strategic communication originates from media and communication studies and public relations. *Strategic*

communication also adopts a holistic approach to organisations in regard to their communication. This means that the dichotomy existing between public relations (focus on external communication) and organisational communication (internal communication) is no longer valid. *Strategic communication* contains the entire organisation and integrates knowledge from other disciplines such as organisation theory, social theory, media theory and communication theory (Falkheimer & Heide 2014).

According to Botan (1997) *strategic communication* is very often applied to planned communication campaigns. *Strategic communication* campaigns are conducted under many labels including public relations, community relations, constituent relations, crisis management, health promotion, issues management, investor relations, membership relations, outreach, public affairs, public health, public information, risk communication, strategic advertising, strategic marketing, etc. *Strategic communication* is the broader and more inclusive term for referring to planned, research-based persuasive and informational campaigns (Botan 1997). All the campaigns have as a common purpose the influencing of individuals, groups, organisations, even whole societies. A campaign intended to influence suggests a relationship, or a desired relationship, between the parties. Many campaigns define their goals only from the perspective of their sponsor so they typically seek to reduce the receivers as a vehicle for achieving those needs. The advance in communication technology make such campaigns more efficiently than before (Botan 1997).

Strategic communication permeates the entire organisation, thus affecting not only the traditional function that handles communication issues, but also those that handle marketing. A fundamental starting point in *strategic communication* is that communication is not a simple tool for transmitting information and knowledge between people in an objectified world, but the very means for producing and a resource that produces the social world (Falkheimer & Heide 2014: 132). Central to the issue of *strategic communication* is the idea of influence. Organisations that want to change the behavior of others have four tools at their disposal: physical force, patronage, purchase, and persuasion (Cutlip, Center & Broom 1995, cited in Hallahan et al. 2007). The latter involves the use of communication, which means that persuasion is the essences of *strategic communication* (Hallahan et al. 2007).

According to Halloran, "Successful *strategic communication* assumes a defensible policy, a respectable identity, a core value. In commercial marketing, the product for sale must be well-made and desirable" (Halloran 2007: 7). Furthermore, "*Strategic communication* begins with identifying audiences" (Halloran 2007: 7). The message must be clear, thought through, and tested for possible misunderstandings. As communication takes place through newspapers and the Internet via for instance Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs and mobile phones, a single audience might be targeted, but due to social media many other groups will hear and read the transmitted message which means that the message must be directed to all audiences (Halloran 2007).

The contemporary rapid development of *strategic communication* is, according to Mahoney (2011), interpreted as a consequence of increased organisational uncertainty due to the global economic crisis of 2008/2009. In market communication, there has been a shift from short-spanned tactical communication to interactive, strategic and relationship-building communication (Jaffe 2007). Advertising on the Internet may take many forms, such as campaign sites, banners, portals, websites, search engine marketing, viral marketing, blogs, emails, pop-ups, in-game advertising or advertising in virtual worlds such Second Life. The Internet's status has become almost equal to other traditional media of mass communication, and it often plays a central role in integrated campaigns (Bugge 2010). Furthermore, the Internet is not only a communication channel; it is also a sales and distribution channel. The Internet allows online interaction with the customer and this engaging experience may give the consumer a stronger loyalty and commitment to the product than traditional one-way communication (Bugge 2010).

3. Identity

Identity is the second of the key issues discussed in several papers in this issue of *Globe*. One could say that Balfaqeeh, Li, Norlyk and Larsen & Pedersen all in one way or another deal with identity, directly or indirectly.

Identity has been studied for many centuries: "The topic of 'who we are' is one that has attracted scholars and thinkers throughout the centuries" (McKinlay & McVittie 2011: ix). In Merriam-Websters online dictionary the word *identity* is defined in a first simple definition as: "who someone is: the name of a person", letting it quite simply be equal to a person's name. The second simple definition is: "the qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others". This definition highlights two important points of the concept, i.e. that both persons and groups can have an identity, and that the identity differentiates that particular person/group from others.

The notion 'who we are' might indicate that identity is a fixed concept, that one's identity does not change when it is once established, but nowadays most researchers agree, that this is not the case and that identity is a very complicated concept (Hansen 2014: 140). A plausible distinction between social/group identity and personal identity is suggested in the definition of identity by Van Dijk (2000): on the one hand the personal identity, which is "a mental representation as (personal) self as a unique human being with its own, personal experiences and biography…", and on the other hand the social or group identity that can be seen as "a mental representation of (social) self as a collection of group memberships, and the identification processes that are related to such membership representations" (Van Dijk 1998: 119-120). A relatively similar division of identities is made by Aaker (2002: 86) concerning brand identity. He separates a fixed core identity representing the essence or DNA of the brand, based on the brand's history, and an extended identity that can be constructed more freely by the company. Although the latter distinction suggests that the part of identity referred to as DNA is fixed, it also states that the foundation is history and thus it is gradually constructed and based on abstractions from (personal) experiences and located in episodic memory (cf. Van Dijk 1998: 118). This makes it comparable to the above mentioned definition by Van Dijk.

According to Van Dijk (1998) the processes leading to the building of identity depend on comparisons between the personal self and the social self: "If the membership criteria, activities, goals, norms, values, position or resources of the group are in line with (at least consistent with) those of the personal self-construct, identification may be more or less strong" (Van Dijk 1998: 120).

In Baker & Ellece (2011), two perceptions of identity are mentioned. Identity is defined by some as "fixed and stable and is what people speak of when they talk about 'who we really are'" (Baker & Ellece 2011: 58), whereas others hold the opinion that identity can be 'acquired' as "it is a conscious or internalized adoption of socially imposed or socially constructed roles" (Baker & Ellece 2011: 58).

We see identity as a complex concept that is partly stable (personal identity) and based on history, biography or previous experiences, partly being negotiated as well as "constructed, maintained and challenged through the particularities of social interaction" (McKinlay & McVittie 2011: ix).[2] Identity is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion and gender among other dimensions, and, as stated by McKinlay & McVittie (2011: ix), is applied in all contexts.

It can be difficult to 'be someone' or at least to know 'who we are' in isolation. In interaction with others, however, we compare ourselves with the others, as individuals, as group members, as companies, etc., and construct and (re)define ourselves accordingly. In other words, individuals examine which similarities and differences between 'me'/'us' and 'the others' can be detected. This is

2 See the discussion of 'self' and 'identity' in McKinlay & McVittie (2011: 3-6).

a crucial aspect of establishing identity for an individual or a group. "The identity concept is not about individuals as such, nor about society as such, but the relation of the two" (Verkuyten 2005: 42). This point also highlights the fact that a person can construct many group memberships (cf. Van Dijk 1998: 118) and thus many identities at the same time, due to the many types of interaction the individual continuously engages in. An individual might at the same time be a mother, a wife and a daughter, which leads to different identities with different characteristics for that same person. Similarly she might also, at the same time, be a consumer and an employee, if she works in for instance a pharmaceutical company and buys goods produced by that very company. As another example from this issue of *Globe*, if a person makes her living as an artist she is to some extent both an artist and a businesswoman. These different parts of the identity, or in fact different identities that a person holds, gives her affiliation to different groups. The different identities and groups might not all the time share the same interests and ideas; this makes the concept of identity even more complex. The consumer might appreciate and enjoy lower prices of pharmaceuticals, while her interests as an employee of the pharmaceutical company might be that prices of company goods to a certain extent go up in order to make it possible to secure larger profits for the company and eventually higher wages (cf. Bauhofer 2004: 33; Pedersen 2006: 59-60).

As we have seen above, it is important that identity is not seen as a stable concept that does not change over time. This becomes especially clear in Norlyk's paper, where artists are confronted with different possible identities.

Companies can be said to share many characteristics with humans. Consequently, companies can be seen as individuals with their own identities and with an understanding of their own personalities, too, as is suggested for example by Herbst (2012) and other researchers working with the concept of Corporate Identity. This identity is based on the employees' understanding of the company, and this identity is demonstrated in the thinking, acting and performance of the company as a whole (Herbst 2012: 28). According to Herbst (2012), companies can benefit strongly from investing in identity work, as it helps the stakeholders' orientation and identification with the company. This evokes trust from the stakeholder, which is important in order to be successful in this globalized world with growing competition of companies (Herbst 2012: 12-14). In opposition to this, Bolten (2007: 93) rejects Corporate Identity as a relevant notion for companies to focus on, due to the quick changes in cooperation and strategic alliances in the globalized world. It is, of course, true that alliances change rapidly nowadays, but it seems too hasty to conclude that identity has lost its significance for companies. Accordingly, in the paper by Larsen & Pedersen, we see how nationality is used to construct identity discursively in companies, and in Balfaqeeh's paper we see how a company uses nationality, religion and personalization of communication to mark its relations to stakeholder groups and to construct its identity. In the analysis performed by Li, we see how the identity of a company shows itself in its acts in the form of impoliteness in autoreplies. This shows us that identity is closely related to discourse in the sense that "[p]eople will construct identities for themselves and for others as they interact with others through discourse" (McKinlay & McVittie 2011: 14). Therefore, discourse research can provide a useful framework for studying identity as we will see in the articles presented below.

4. Presentation of the articles in this volume

Texts meant for customers represent an essential part of the corporate communication aiming at promoting the organisation and its products. In the article *"It's all about you…": The discourse of banking in the UAE,* Balfaqeeh analyses an advertising campaign realised for the Al Hilal Bank in the United Arab Emirates which has changed people's perceptions of banking and the relationships between the bank and society. The change of perception and the tools used for this purpose are the focal points of the study when analysing the discourses presented in a selected corpus of 19 advertising posters used on commercial billboards and in the different branches of the bank. The

analysis of the posters is based on Critical Discourse Analysis and semiotics and accentuates how a new slogan 'It's all about you…' paved the way for the promotion of patriotism and nationalism, of religious occasions and references as well as of social values and the sense of responsibility towards the family. Leaving out references to banking services, but indirectly promoting the bank by appealing to people's emotions and important occasions, the bank managed to create a shift from conducting traditional banking to communicating in ways that supported costumers' possibilities to become better citizens.

For many years now, theorists as well as practitioners have discussed the influence of the constantly growing globalisation on market communication, specifically in relation to the traditional use of nationality markers such as country of origin and made-in. On the one hand, globalisation entails a weakening of the local nationalities when technologies, products and life styles are similar and equally accessible to everyone on a worldwide scale. National companies have to be able to compete globally in regards to quality, amount, product price and brand identity. Thus, differentiation from competitors is necessary in order to survive on a market place where globalising as well as localising are on-going processes. Larsen & Pedersen investigate this complex set of tendencies in the article *Corporate identity in a globalised world: A study of elements marking national identities on company websites.* Focusing on the use of nationality, verbally and visually, on company websites, the article revolves around the identification of the extent to which companies related to the wind power industry use nationality in their positioning and as a marker of identity. For this purpose, the authors conduct analysis of a corpus of 256 selected websites distributed in Germany, Denmark, Great Britain and the United States against a theoretical background of corporate identity and country of origin. Although globalisation tends to neglect the importance of nationality, the analysis points to the preference of some companies, particularly Danish companies, to use aspects of country of origin as an identity and positioning signifier which is a tendency differentiating the Danish companies from companies in the other countries studied in the article.

One of the digitalized world's new phenomena is online crowdfunding, which is an easily accessible way for projects to raise funds when working for e.g. human rights. For this purpose, Internet based platforms have been created and serve as means to reach and persuade potential supporters to engage with specific projects. In the article *Discursive legitimation in online crowdfunding: A study of Kickstarter projects promoting human rights*, Kedves studies the discursive strategies applied by project creators in the descriptions of projects on the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter which is one of the most popular platforms of its kind. As the focus of the actual study is the identification of strategies used to legitimise the crowdfunding, a framework within discourse analysis is applied to analyse the legitimation strategies of the social action 'donating money'. On the basis of a corpus of 96 projects related to human rights and launched between 2013 and 2015, the author analyses occurrences of authority, morality, rationalisation or mythopesis in the project descriptions. Results indicate that support and donation offer social validation and altruistic identity to donators, and that rationalism and the appeal to morality are the conspicuous discursive strategies used to legitimize the social action of crowdfunding. Furthermore, the author suggests that rationalisation and appeal to morality in relation to specific campaign causes within crowdfunding is indicative of a new genre.

When business partners originating from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds communicate, they often use English as a lingua franca and emails as the preferred media for written interactions. The complexity of having to deal with a lingua franca, of possible cultural differences, of the genre specific style featuring traits from written and spoken language may entail the risk of being misunderstood or regarded as being impolite by the interlocutor. In the article, *Investigating impoliteness in workplace emails by Chinese users of English,* the author Li investigates politeness strategies and impolite devices to get an insight into the functions of

politeness/impoliteness when dealing with high-stake activities, such as making strong requests and conveying negative messages. The data used for the analysis consist of 373 emails gathered from 2008 to 2012 in a company operating in the textile production industry in Hong Kong with offices in mainland China. Methodologically, the study is based on a corpus approach and discourse analysis in order to study the relationship between speech acts and the occurrence of impoliteness and non-politeness as well as to get an insight into the circumstances, patterns and functions of impoliteness in the workplace emails. The analysis points to the assertive speech act as the most hazardous when it comes to possible provocations of impoliteness whereas message enforcers are the impoliteness device, which is most common when making demands, emphasizing positions or placing blames.

Advertising and promotion may be regarded as outcomes of an important marketing communications industry in which creativity is paramount. Agencies traditionally working from regions surrounding major cities are known to set the standard for creativity within the industry and to succeed in legitimizing the standards via public and social media, prestigious clients and major campaigns. In his article*,"We're not here anymore": The cultural dislocations of creative organizations in outlying regions,* Baillargeon addresses how smaller agencies which are situated outside major cities in Canada, and which rarely create campaigns achieving prestige, maintain a creative culture. Two case studies of smaller advertising agencies are analysed from a discourse analytic approach when conducting analysis of their websites and data from in-depth semi-structured interviews of 33 employees as well as when analysing observations of the work, the internal meetings and the meetings with clients. Introduction of the ideas of ventriloquism is used in regards to the assessment of organisational culture and to unite the macro and the micro levels of the organisational discourse when studying the relations between regionality, organisations and creativity. Using five 'iconic figures' of creative culture: seclusion, defence, distinctiveness, maturity and expansiveness, the author suggests that a creative culture is maintained in outlying regions by dislocating to 'a creative elsewhere', but furthermore, that regionality constantly appears in the discourse of the employees in these outlying agencies.

Taking the starting point in a perception of identity as being not stable but negotiable, identity is closely related to discourse and interaction. This implies that identity may change and that one person may possess more identities each of them related to different settings, occasions and contexts. When professional designers within jewellery, fashion, graphic and installation art participate in a course on business and entrepreneurship they experience identity conflicts of personal and professional kind as studied by Norlyk in the article *Professional discourse and professional identities at cross-purposes: Designer or entrepreneur?* These identity conflicts emerge when the designers have to adopt the ideas of business and market considerations alongside their professional ideas of aesthetics. The data of the study consist of recorded discourses, metaphors and framing devices put forward by 25 designers during a business course as well as of 12 in-depth interviews with the designers, which have been analysed within the framework of phenomenology and Reflective Lifeworld Research. The methodology allows involving studies on discourse, metaphors and framing, studies on identity in a business and organizational context, and studies on sensemaking and sensegiving processes in organizations. The data demonstrate four lexical clusters present in the designers' discourses, metaphors and framing devices. The clusters consist of the themes: a) experiences of physical force related to the body; b) experiences of conflicts of identity; c) experiences of the enemy; and d) experiences of entrapment. Thus, the study reveals the identity conflict appearing between the designers' intellectual need to develop business skills and their emotional, professional and personal identity.

For several years, theorists have discussed the relationship between organisational culture and strategic communication, as well as the question of the impact of these concepts on organisational communication. In their article *Strategy and organizational culture. Conceptualizing the interplay*

of key concepts in communication, Winkler & Zerfass develop the discussion by outlining definitions of strategy and organizational culture, by applying the generic similarities to the concept CCO (communication constitutes organisations) and by the explanation of how cooperation between organizational culture and strategic communication may reveal insights for science and practice. Using the 'four flows of communication' to analyse organizational change and the communication related to it, the authors accentuate the generic similarities between the concepts and demonstrate the impact on organisational communication. Analysis based on 'the four flows' may help raising awareness of organisational communication as being positioned between openness and identity, and between consistency and flexibility, whereas credibility, trust and good stakeholder relations may appear from the interplay between the concepts of organisational communication. Furthermore, the authors stress the importance of practitioners to be aware of the relationship between strategy and culture as well as between stability and flexibility, an awareness that may facilitate organisational change processes and cultural boundaries.

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It's all about you...: The discourse of banking in the UAE

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Abstract: Al Hilal Bank, a national bank was established in 2008, and since then they managed to change people's perceptions on banking and their interaction with this financial institution. This change was marked by the distinctive 'syntactic personalization' represented by its slogan "it's all about you" and extended to the constant 'intertextuality' and 'interdiscursivity' which redefined the relationship between this local bank and society. Thus, this era was not only marked by the marketization of public discourse but also promoting their business through the promotion of social and public events. They adopted two major directions: 1. The promotion of 'patriotism and nationalism', 2. Their promotion of religious occasions, and using religious references in posters that do not refer to any of their banking services. Using Critical Discourse Analysis as our framework, we analyze a selected corpus of Al Hilal Bank's discourse through analyzing both text and talk in addition to the semiotic practices represented in the posters that appeared on national Billboards. The aim of this paper is to study and document the shift that took place in the Banking discourse in the United Arab Emirates, describing the main tools which are used to indirectly promote the bank, by either appealing emotionally to their audience targeting the most important and sentimental occasions or exploiting the authority of theirs.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, inter-textualization, syntactic personalization, social change.

1. Introduction

Recently, discourse analysts have monitored and documented the shift that took place in institutional discourse and in contemporary "late capitalist" societies (Fairclough 2010: 97). Starting with the adoption of synthetic personalization (Fairclough 2001: 52) even when it comes to greeting fast food customers to the intertextualization while promoting any hospital's brochures to describe one's experience as a patient as a spa-like experience with no reference to the doctors, their expertise or experience. This global phenomenon has affected the United Arab Emirates, and we have seen as citizens and residents a major shift in the discourse of many institutions among those the discourse used by the health care, educational and banking sectors. And despite the fact that the impact of this shift varied from one sector to the other (i.e. medical and educational sectors were more affected than many other sectors), its impact on the banking sector is quite visible. This impact was also witnessed in the United Arab Emirates' banking discourse, more specifically after the establishment of Al Hilal Bank.

Since Al Hilal Bank was founded in 2008,[1] it managed to change the way banks in the UAE communicate with their customers or as they stated in their vision statement "To consistently set new standards that re-define the Islamic banking market across the world".[2] They came with a new language, a new medium and a new message, represented by their slogan "it's all about you". And since they have adopted this slogan, their message literally revolved around their customer's lives and around all the things that might be considered as a priority to their customers.

This new language use may be seen as an extension or expansion of what HSBC started in 2002 with their slogan "the world's local bank" (Koller 2007: 116) through which the bank wanted to rebrand itself and adopt a regional strategy through which they send "regional, or local messages … Considered to be much more specific and tailored to the communities they represent, and may include cities, states and regions" (Bradish et al. 2003: 210).

In this paper we examine in detail the advertising campaigns of the bank which revolved

1 'History and background' (2015).
2 'Vision Statement, Mission & Vision' (2015).

around three main themes: 1. The promotion of patriotism and nationalism, 2. Their promotion of religious occasions, and using religious references in posters that do not refer to any of their banking services. 3. The use of social values and sense of responsibility towards customers' families. The paper will highlight the use of 'intertextuality' and 'interdiscursivity' in their message, whether verbal or semiotic. The aim of this paper is to study and document the shift that took place in the banking discourse in the United Arab Emirates, to describe the main tools which are used to promote the bank indirectly and its services by either appealing emotionally to their audience targeting the most important and sentimental occasions or using the authority of their references.

2. Advertisement as a discourse

According to Pollay and Gallagher (1990) the main focus of advertising is to highlight "certain attitudes, behaviors and values, lifestyles and philosophies," (Pollay & Gallagher 1990, as cited in Huat 2008: 35). The primary aim of advertising is to reshape reality and reconstruct a new fantasy-like reality, in which living like an A-list becomes tangible and you as a consumer are allowed to see the norms and values communicated to you through the lens of the advertiser. Consequently, "the receiver's mental ability is put to the test as he or she is challenged by intelligently encrypted information" (Proctor et al. 2001: 246).

On the other hand, Van Niekerk (2008: 499) states that advertisement can also be considered as a mirror of the society as it reflects the society's "dominant values in terms of morals, religion, perspectives and norms are all reflected in the dataset". It would also be based on our real lives referring to well-known characters or those who may add value to the message sent. Finally, "many intertextual advertisements communicating a certain ideology are totally incomprehensible to the out group (non-intended target market) and whether you do or do not understand a certain intertextual (ideological) advertisement characterizes you" (Van Niekerk 2008: 499). This means that an individual's interpretation may vary according to relevance of the message in relation to his/her ideology, values, knowledge and understanding of the world.

According to the literature, advertisements also tend to avoid making claims that may need to be supported with evidence; therefore they will always hide the real content or substance of their commercial and rely on their audience to make the right inferences and to put them in the exact mental and emotional state the advertiser desire (Proctor et al. 2001: 247). In this way, they can avoid taking any responsibility if their audience made the wrong inferences, or if they inferred "more meaning than is actually proffered" (Proctor et al 2001: 247).

According to Proctor et al. (2001: 247-248), "postmodern advertisements destroy the traditional narrative structure by presenting fragmented sequences of images, affection and mood and make it difficult for the viewer to reconstruct a story line … [it] depend[s] largely on nonlinguistic means and utilize[s] overlapping and fragmented images". They added that the relationship between the product and the consumer turned into an ambiguous relationship, in which the consumer will not be able to envisage the described product nor the emotions that may appear after owning it, therefore postmodern advertisement will not lead to the mental conflict created by this mental exercise – processing the advertisement mentally (Proctor et al. 2001: 248).

The banking sector is one of the sectors that rely heavily on the use of different mediums of advertisements; among the normally used mediums "banks use printed advertisements in newspapers, magazines and posters, broadcast advertisements in radio and television networks, social networking sites and road shows" (Chong & Ahmed 2014: 135) and they continue to adapt to reshape themselves through adopting creative ideas to market their products. In a study that investigated Malaysian banking brochures, the researchers concluded that banking advertisements relied on five major strategies, and these are "announcing the products, attracting attention, establishing credential, introducing products and calling for action" (Chong & Ahmed 2014: 143). According to the literature, due to the fact that all banks offer similar products, they would focus on

their advertisements on a "singular message" (Chong & Ahmed 2014: 143) in their advertisements which also focuses on one of their services. This might be necessarily the case for other sectors like tourism or educational sectors. Another interesting point in banks' advertisements is that they highlight their targeting population through the use of "non-verbal elements as an implicit appeal to their targeted audience" (Chong & Ahmed 2014: 145) (i.e. images of multigenerational families) unlike the educational sector which includes their mission statement in their advertisement which would verbally specify their contribution to the community (Chong & Ahmed 2014: 144-145).

3. Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework

This paper will employ Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA) as its primary methodology with a focus on the use of intertextuality and interdiscursivity. The reason behind choosing CDA is the fact that it establishes a link between a specific message and social practice. For them "discourse is not language per se, but is a system that under-girds the language as well as the values and beliefs hidden in language, including the ways such beliefs construct subject positions for people" (Lunga 2007:104). In this sense, all messages communicated through text or picture would carry along with it a hidden message that would reshape the way people understand the world around them. CDA aims to "bring together linguistically-oriented discourse analysis and social and political thought relevant to discourse and language, in the form of a framework which will be suitable for use in social and scientific research" (Fairclough 1992:62, as cited in Proctor et al 2001: 249). Consequently it connects the linguistics analysis with the social practice and structure with the newly constructed social order (Proctor et al. 2001: 249-250).

According to Lunga (2007: 106), "CDA specializes in uncovering the close links among language, ideology and power in society and further seeks to show up connections that may be hidden from people and questions the taken-for-granted notions of discourse, identity or gender." In other words, a discourse may have the power to conceal, to expose and to reshape or naturalize both existing and new social practices.

However, for many years CDA was interested in the analysis of verbal discourses until recently. According to the literature, "Van Leeuwen (2012) emphasizes the importance of merging CDA and multimodal discourse analysis, and suggests following a cross-disciplinary approach" (Wang 2014: 266) in order to create 'critical multimodal discourse analysis'. This methodology entails three different modules: "discursive narrative, visual intertextual, and critical visual metaphoric analysis" (Wang 2014: 267).

3.1. Intertextuality

The analysis in the paper will concentrate on intertextuality which is defined as "'a permutation of texts, and intertextuality: in the space of a given text several utterances taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another' (to give a (new) intertextual meaning)" (Van Niekerk 2008: 497). In this context, "all ads even those making no explicit allusions, carry associations from other texts, ads, movies, novels, everyday talk" (Myers 1994: 4, as cited in Van Niekerk 2008: 497). Another definition of intertextuality is "the way in which one text echoes or refers to another text … Intertextuality can operate at many different levels of language, from phonological and lexical references in titles and slogans to visual aspects such as layouts and images" (Goddard 1998, as cited in Van Niekerk 2008: 498).

Based on this definition, one would think that the use of intertextuality would be an expected element in advertising, since advertising relied on the minimal use of text with the maximum impact possible. And the use of intertextuality and even topoi would enrich the message conveyed to the readers with the least amount of effort verbally and visually. Consequently, it becomes the duty within this discourse of the receiver to connect the different components of the advertisement and generate or construct the message behind the advertisement. This also means that "consciously or

unconsciously readers [will] place it in wider frames of references of language and knowledge, cross-fertilizing a particular reading with other discourses drawn from their own socially, culturally and historically situated experiences" (Proctor et al 2001: 248-249). And therefore, their understanding of the same message may vary depending on these variables or frames.

It is important to note that there are two forms of intertextuality; according to Conradie (2011: 295), these are:

> constitutive intertextuality (Fairclough 1993). Its characteristic function, as mentioned above, is the 'merging of prior texts in new texts which may assimilate, contradict, or ironically echo them' (Momaniet al. 2010). It contrasts with manifest intertextuality (Fairclough 1993), in which intertextuality is explicitly marked as such by quotation marks or citations (Momaniet al. 2010).

3.2. Topoi

According to King (1975: 1) "Topoi are "places" in the mind where items of information (ideas, arguments, etc.) may be stored". These events are usually associated mentally and cognitively with certain feelings or ideas or even an overall mind set which may vary form one person to the other in their impact and intensity (King 1975: 2). Additionally, he argues that topos in its modern sense went even beyond that by stating that "they represent conceptual "cues" to items in memory derived from an awareness of some abstract, higher-order relationships among ideas" (King 1975: 5) which might lead to a "greater recall of information to a given subject than would unaided (or free) recall" (King 1975: 6).

Recently, the use of religious topos has become a common rhetorical tool in political and media discourses. This merge between language and religion may not be surprising, since they "cast light on our own system of values" (Silk 1995: 51) and reflect the deeply-rooted beliefs (Moore 2003: 51). and culture can be hugely dependent on religious beliefs. Moore states, that culture is not static and therefore topoi usually change depending on culture.

3.3. Interdiscursivity

Interdiscursivity or what is also referred to as 'dialogicality'[3] or 'Constitutive Intertextuality'[4] is "the mixing of diverse genres, discourses, or styles associated with institutional and social meanings in a single text" (Wu 2011: 96) that "may contribute to changing the character of and relations between social practices" (Fairclough 2010: 359).

The distinction between intertextuality and interdiscursivity is the same difference text and context, according to Bhatia (2004: 392):

> Where intertextuality refers to the use of prior texts transforming the past into the present often in relatively conventionalized and somewhat standardized ways; interdiscursivity, on the other hand, refers to more innovative attempts to create hybrid or relatively novel constructs by appropriating or exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other genres and practices.

For him, these hybrid texts, composed of 'private intentions' and 'socially recognized communicative purposes' are "the result of several factors, including the ever-increasing use of multi-media, explosion of information technology, multi-disciplinary contexts of the world of work,

3 Despite that fact that these two terms are used interchangeably in the literature, Wu believes that "dialogicality is a much more general property or principle of language use, discourse and cognition, whereas interdiscursivity is a relatively specific linguistic phenomenon that bears social significance." (Wu 2011:98).

4 The term was introduced by Fairclough (1992) drawing upon the work of Bakhtin (1986). (Wu 2012:1313).

increasing competitive professional (academic as well as business) environment, and the overwhelmingly compulsive nature of promotional advertising activities" (Bhatia 1995, as cited in Wu 2011: 102). Consequently, these hybrid new texts led to a change in the social order; as we started seeing a mixture of discourse orders to reposition the consumers or receivers and change the overall definition of their role and contribution.

Fairclough has referred to several discourses which he identified as newly emerging discourse practices, among those:

> Marketization is linked to other buzzwords of the1970s and 1980s like 'commodification', 'promotional culture', 'consumer culture'. Marketization is in part marketization of discourse, and is often arguably 'discourse-led', i.e. begins as changes in discourse which are then operationalized in changes in practices, relations, identities, etc. (Fairclough 2011: 3-4).

He also identified in his analysis of the discourse of the New Labor "Social action as an alternative to state action is elaborated" (Fairclough 2011: 5), which may attributed to the fact that relationships and identities in this era has become an openly negotiated matter and consequently "entails greater possibilities than the fixed relationships and identities of traditional society, but also a greater risk" (Fairclough 2010: 98). This shift in discourse has led to a departure from the traditional 'informalisation' of public discourse to the 'conversationalisation' of public discourse (Fairclough 2010: 98).

Fairclough (2010: 99) also identifies 'reflexivity' and the fact that "the construction of self-identity is a reflexive project, involving resource to expert systems (e.g. therapy or counseling)." Finally, he also addresses in his research the 'promotional' or 'consumer' culture that has affected the discourse orders which has led to the manipulation of meaning and a "shift towards greater dependence upon visual image at the relative expense of verbal semiosis" (Fairclough 2010: 99). In the process of a critical visual metaphoric analysis discursivity is studied through a discursive narrative visual analysis which was proposed by Fairclough. Fairclough's framework consists of three different layers: a. a visual description of the image, b. a visual interpretation that focuses on the production of the image, the distribution which looks into the way in which "the readers/viewers ... accept the ideologies encoded by the producer" (Wang 2014: 274). Finally c. social practice explanation which sheds light on how these images "can shape viewers' minds" (Wang 2014: 270).

4. Al Hilal Bank: A new prospective towards banking

Al Hilal Bank was officially launched in 2008 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Their launch was marked by their fresh prospective towards banking and the role and duty of the bank as an institution towards their customers. It was also marked by their innovative approach and their continuous attempt to attract the younger generation to join them. Their distinctive approach was apparent since the opening of their first branch which they called 'The Mall' that would offer their customers an experience that resembles their shopping or mall experience. The mall experience was characterized by the spacious halls, showcasing their products to mimic the window shopping experience, children's play area to engage the customers' kids in banking related games and finally a car showroom that includes top notch cars and a car registration service center. The experience offered in this branch was clearly expressed in their corporate values published on their website. It states that one of their values is to be: 1. professional and their interpretation of professionalism is through being proactive; anticipating and responding to their customers' needs. 2. progressive and to offer cutting edge innovation and finally 3. partnership, and to become a bank that works with their customers to allow them to successfully achieve what they would like to achieve in life (Corporate

Values 2015).

5. Data collection and analysis

The analysis will be based on 19 advertising posters which were grouped under 3 main themes: 1. their promotion of patriotism and nationalism, 2. their promotion of religious occasions, and using religious references in posters that do not refer to any of their banking services, and 3. their use of social values and sense of responsibility towards their families. All these posters were used on commercial billboards and in the different branches on the bank.[5] Similar themes were also used for televised commercials which will not be included in the scope of this paper. All these posters can also be accessed online through different search engines.

In this paper we will conduct a two stage analysis. The first is a semiotic analysis which "breaks down the content of texts into their component parts and relates them to broader discourses … putting into words how images work by relating them to the ideological structure which organizes meaning" (Huat 2008: 39). The second stage will concentrate on the textual analysis to spot the light on three specific features: intertextuality, topoi and interdiscursivity.

6. Analysis

A good starting point for the analysis is the bank's logo which they published along with an interpretation of what it means and how did they choose it. Their logo comes with a white background and features a simple orange square surrounded by an orange circle. According to Al Hilal Bank "the square represents you and reinforces our commitment that you are at the center of everything we do" (Al Hilal Identity 2015), while the circle placed at the center "represents us and our relationship with you our customers, surrounded by our help and support"(Al Hilal Identity 2015):

Figure 1: Al Hilal Bank Logo

The use of orange with a white background highlights the contrast between the two colors and emphasizes the freshness of the orange color which is not commonly used in banks which would prefer the different shades of blue and green (Sferi 2000: 47, 49). This is a contrast that the bank wanted to build on to reflect its refreshing prospective that might appeal to the younger generation which seems to be their targeted audience.

According to Granger (1955, a cited in Sferi 2000: 47) "the hues of shorter wavelength are preferred to those of longer wavelength; the blues and greens are preferred to the yellows, oranges and reds". However, the use of the colors known as the long-wave colors like red and orange is known to be more arousing than the commonly used short-wave colors, like green and blue (Sferi 2000: 48). And one would think that this is the impact that Al Hilal Bank is trying to have on their

5 These posters were readily available online for the public.

customers.

The posters included in this analysis were divided into three groups, which are discussed below.

6.1. The promotion of patriotism and nationalism

In this group of posters an overall generalization would be the use of the white background to highlight the contrast between the background and the colors used; which in this case were the national flag colors (red, green, black and white). Most of these posters were created during the country's National Day, which can be considered as one of the peaks of the bank's advertisement. These posters were also created between 2008 and 2014; however, the researcher could not identify the exact date of publication for each of these posters.

In Figure 2, the advertisers use a sketch of the iconic buildings Albahar Towers, colored in red and green with a white background. The poster also includes a quote by the late founder of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan that says “The most important accomplishment of this union from my point of view is to make the society happy through providing this nation with all means of luxury and development.”[6] The poster also includes a new logo placed above the bank's name and logo of what seems to be a flag; with a pole and instead of the flag a book, which might be a reference to the United Arab Emirates' constitution. The use of these iconic buildings which were included in the 'innovative 20' list of buildings[7] and symbolize sustainability, contemporary yet cultural design and to reintroduce them suing the national flag colors might be to give them a new identity as national symbol of what the United Arab Emirates envisions for its future. This is also reinforced through the text used to indicate that this vision was initiated by the founder of the country. Also, this image was also formulated to give the viewers a sense of ownership of one of the country's achievements.

Figure 2: Albahar Towers sketch

Figure3: Victory hand gesture

In Figure 3, once again the poster relies on the contrast created through the use of the white background versus a hand colored in the flag's colors and showing the victory hand gesture. This contrast draws the viewer's eyes towards the hand and therefore the signal and the flag colors. At the right corner of the poster, we can see what we believe is the constitution/flag logo above the bank's logo. The message that the viewer will see here is 'victory will be availed with the help of Emirati citizens and under the umbrella of the law or constitution.' This is another strong message that involves the viewer to make him take a shared responsibility and presents the bank as a

6 The translation is provided by the researcher.

7 'Abu Dhabi most iconic buildings: part 1' (2014).

medium to reinforce this message.

Figure 4, which is the last poster in this group, was created in 2014 for the National Day celebration as part of a campaign that would use people's voices to generate energy that would raise the Emirati flag. The poster starts with the bank's name and logo on the right side and the 2014 official National Day logo at the left to indicate that this is part of the banks' celebration of the National Day. At the center, it shows a black sketch of three people singing; two men, one of them seems to be singing wholeheartedly, and a woman who is holding her mobile phone happily recording her voice with multicolor (flag's colors) melodies sketched at the right and left sides of the poster. At the top of the sketch a picture of a balloon with the campaign slogan scripted on it carrying the Emirati flag.

Figure 4: National Day sketch

The text on the poster states:

Allow your voice to raise your flag, (in red)
The more you repeat the national Anthem, the more you raise the flag.
Participate with us and repeat the national anthem, and help in launching a balloon that lifts the flag to the edge of space in celebration of the 43rd National Day.
Please visit itsallabout.ae to know how to participate with us.
#it's all about the union (in red and green)

The poster is signed with the bank's toll free number and web address at the right corner with 'its all about the union' in orange. And on the left corner the logos of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

One common feature in all three posters is what Billing (1995) refers to as Banal Nationalism. According to him “expressions of nationalism are as important as more extraordinary 'flag-waving' events … [and] every day we are reminded that we belong to a nation through routine occurrences including using passports, the language of political speakers, the media and academia” (Prideaux 2009: 617). And despite the fact that advertisements have been used for many years as “ongoing reminders of identity, companies are not traditionally regarded as actors having a major role in the construction of national identity” (Prideaux 2009: 618). In this case, Al Hilal Bank focuses on the promotion of nationalism through the use of the flag, the iconic buildings and an indirect reference

to the constitution which replaced references to their services as a bank. Such an attempt shifts the bank's position form competing with other banks and reintroduces it as a reminder of national identity.

6.2. The promotion of patriotism and nationalism through football

In this set, we included three posters all of which were created to highlight the participation of the UAE under-23 football team in the Olympics 2012 (Oberjuerge 2012).What makes this group of posters special is the reference to the bank's services – a credit card that was issued to the public to support the national team.

Figure 5: Integrated logos and credit card with the UAE national football team

This is another poster that utilizes the white/light grey background with the logo of the Olympics and bank's logo integrated with it of the left side of the poster. On the right side they include the newly introduced credit card that has the picture of the national team with the flag appearing as a colored water stamp in addition to the UAE Football Association logo which appeared at the right top corner of the card.

The poster's head notes the following: “The Official sponsor of the United Arab Emirates Olympic Team”. In the middle of the poster, and between the card and the Olympics Logo a promotional script is printed in Arabic which states:

> Watch the Olympics UAE football team competing at the Summer Olympics games. Feel Proud and support your team passionately, and join us to support our team so we can live the Olympic dream together![8]

A footnote was also added that states “we are available to answer your queries via Facebook from Sunday to Thursday (9am to 6pm)” which appeared in both Arabic and English.

This is the first reference to one of the bank's services although it has also been introduced along with the promotion of nationalism, which would grant the credit card a similar level of popularity.

Figure 6 includes a colored water stamp of the Olympics logo on the top left side of the poster, and the Al Hilal Bank name and logo appear on the left bottom side along with the UAE Football Association logo, while on the right of the poster there is a huge picture of the National Team football player Hamdan Al Kamali holding the same credit card that appeared in poster 6 holding his thumb up and wearing a t-shirt that includes the UAE Football Association logo on one side and the bank's logo on the other and in the center a bigger image of the same card.

8 Translated by the author.

Figure 6: Hamdan Al Kamali with credit card

The merge between sports and national identity is not a new one in advertisements. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni who studies the way the world cup was presented in South Africa, the world cup in that context was a "signifier that forges a chain of signification with deep symbolic meanings that were used to consolidate the nation-building project and stimulate economic development" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011: 402). The researcher states that "the world cup paved the way for flagging of the nation and the constant reminding of everyone within the borders of the county that they were 'part of a thing called nation'" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2011: 403). However this extensive use of a combination of national symbol (the flag, the national football team, a famous footballer and the Olympics) to advertise for one of its services is not something commonly seen in banking advertisement. The bank utilized all these symbols to link a financial service -the credit card- to nationalism and the creation of a sense of belonging that includes the bank as contributor in this process.

6.3. The promotion of religious practice

This seems to be an unexpected marketing strategy to promote the bank, once again not through the bank's products but rather through the use of religious references or occasions in order to maintain the bank's presence in the public minds.

Figure 7 is a fisheye image of a number of dome shaped buildings which are part of the architectural roof of the Mecca and to be more precise the Ka'ba and the clock tower behind it. 70% of the poster shows a clear blue sky, which adds to the spirituality of the picture, with the bank's logo at the top right of the poster and was signed in an orange font with "#it's all about Umrah". It also includes a text that states:

> As reported by Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah (R.A) that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said in a Hadith (which was narrated and approved by Imam(s) Al-Bukhari and Muslim) that: The performance of the pilgrimage) Umrah is expiation for the sins committed during it and the preceding Umrah. And the reward of Hajj Mabrur (the one accepted by Allah) is nothing except Paradise.[9]

Figure 8 includes a black background to draw the eyes to the picture of the Mecca with its glaring

9 The translation is adopted from: The Hadith book, Minor Bilgrammage (Umra) of Sahih Al Bikhari (available at http://www.searchtruth.com/book_display.php?book=27&translator=1) and the virtues of Umrah (available at http://blog.dawntravels.com/virtues-umrah/).

lights. The poster is also headed by the bank's logo in white to highlight the contrast. It also includes a quote which says “narrated by Aisha that she said, 'O Allah's Messenger! We consider Jihad as the best dead. Should we not fight in Allah (God)'s cause?' He said, 'The best Jihad is Hajj-Mabrur (an accepted Pilgrimage)”.[10]

Figure 7: Ka'ba and clock tower

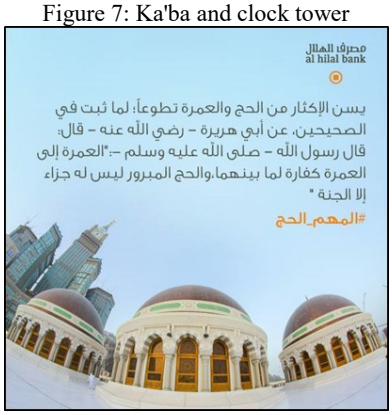
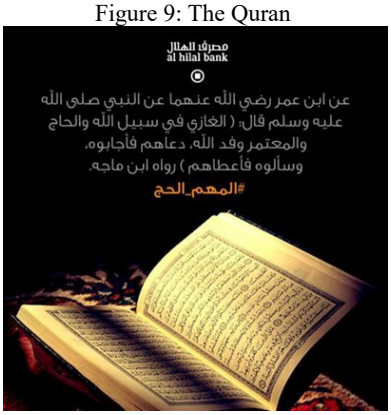


Figure 8: Mecca with lights

Figure 9: The Quran



The use of the dark background and the lights in the middle glorifies that location and makes whatever surround it seems to be irrelevant.

Figure 9 is the second poster that comes in a dark background which puts a visual emphasis on the Quran with yellow pages which might symbolize the age of the book and the prayer mat that appears behind it. The poster also includes a white version of the bank's logo in the middle top of the poster and once again signed with: “it's all about Hajj (pilgrimage)”. This poster refers to another Hadith that states:

> As narrated by Ibn Umar (R.A), reported in Ibn Majah, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said: The one in fight for Allah's cause, the [one in] Hajj, and the one in 'Umrah are delegates of Allah; He called them and they responded Him; and they will ask of His bestowals and He will grant it for them. (The virtues of Umrah)

All posters can be considered emotional appeals that urge the readers to go to pilgrimage whether as 'hajj or Umrah', through reminding them of the place and including a reference to a text of an authority that urges them to do so. In this sense the bank is taking another responsibility in the lives of its customers as a religious mentor and therefore an entity that cares about all details of their customers' lives.

In Figure 10, the poster relies on the use of the colors white, brown and black, and an Islamic arabesque design on the top half of the poster. The lower part of the poster features the shadow of a number of people but with more emphasis on a person looking up at the sky with his arms raised which gives an impression that he is praying or speaking to god. This interpretation is also supported by the light that appears above him with a text that says: “May God enlighten your heart with his words, and reward you with his love and help you to worship him and bless you with his heaven and the companionship of the prophet Mohamed (PBUH) and bless your Friday.”[11] This can be seen as a personification of the bank who is praying for its customers.

10 The book of fighting for the cause of Allah (available at http://sunnah.com/bukhari/56).
11 Translated by the author.

Figure 10: Silhouettes

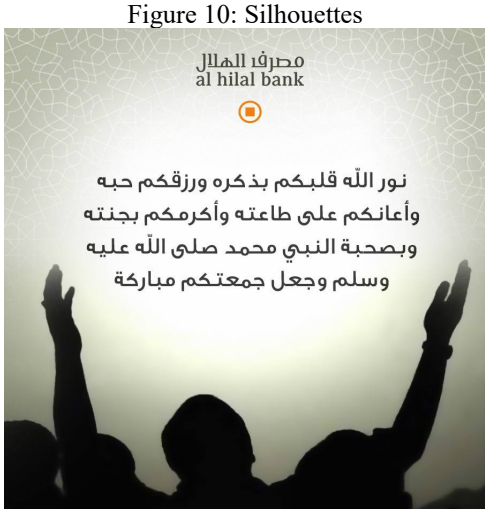


Figure 11: Ka'ba and credit card

Figure 11 refers for the second time to one of the bank's services: a credit card that can be used as compass. The poster has a white background, an image of the credit card at the right side of the poster which is dark in color and visually attracts the attention of the viewer. On the left side of the poster we can see a sketch that looks like a square to represents the floor plan of the Ka'ba 'Mekka's cube' and a group of people/worshipers surrounding. This image resembles the bank's logo. At the bottom of the poster there is a text in orange that says “The World's first compass card that directs you towards the Qibla”, “#it's all about your prayer” and the bank's toll-free number and web address.

The common perception that these posters are trying to build is the social and religious role of the bank, that is seen here as care giving entity and may or may not use services to facilitate the accomplishment of its final goal which as per the message sent here is to uplift those individuals religious life.

6.4. The promotion of social and personal responsibility

This was done through one of their major campaigns named “Seghaar”, or 'kids', to promote the children's banking services offered by the bank. All of these posters were under one theme: “How well do you know your children?” This campaign was broadcasted through a number of videos and

posters. In this part I have selected 5 posters that utilize different strategies.

Figure 12: Children

This poster presents the concept behind this campaign, explaining what the bank tries to do in the campaign. It utilizes a white background which draws your attention to the images and the text. It features three boys and two girls: the first boy is looking at the sky, thinking with a pile of coins in front of him and the conversation bubbles on top of his head indicate that he is weighing his options which are an iPad or a play station. The second boy is holding a plane-like toy and trying to fly it. The third boy unlike the first two who are wearing the national costume, is wearing jeans and a t-shirt and looking at his pockets which are brought out to indicate that he is broke. In the case of the two girls, one of them is smiling and enjoying her iPad, while the other is dressed in fancy cloths and pearl necklaces. The text in this poster appears in two different font sizes and color, the largest states: "How well do you know your kids?"[12] The other text says: "We video recorded the kids while asking them few questions related to money, and there answers were surprising."[13] This poster represents the children's ideas, future plans, technology and financial status.

Figure 13 utilizes once again the bright background to put more emphasis on the image, in which a small girl with a long hair and dressed in a pink dress seems to be busy with her laptop. The image of the girl reinforces an image of typical school girls. The poster also includes a text rendered in both Arabic and English which is not commonly seen in Al Hilal posters, which also implies that they are targeting a wider population. The poster does not include the bank's logo, or any other reference to their campaign. The text says: "9 out of 10 kids would choose an iPad over 10,000 dirhams."

Figure 14 features the first boy we described in Figure 12, however without the thinking bubbles. He is holding a pencil, and has a small orange note book in front of him with a pile of coins. The poster utilizes a white background which draws our attention to the orange pen and notebook, and the orange logo and text. In this poster the text states: "Kids would rather have a pile of coins than a 200 dirhams note". The text appears in grey with larger orange quotation marks. Then another orange text that says: "Let's give them an early start", which can be considered as one of the goals behind this campaign; to allow kids to start thinking about their financial options in order to make better choices in the future.

The poster included what could be described as the mission statement of this campaign, which

12 Translated by the author.
13 Translated by the author.

states:

> Every child has a different personality, and understands money in their own way. We always make sure to listen to our future generations and guide them in the right direction. We help mom and dad plan their education, and teach kids when they can spend and get things they really want, and when they need to make sure that they are prepared for whatever may come their way.

At the bottom right side of the poster, we can see a new logo: “it's all about seghaar (kids)” with new square and circle comic characters that resembles the bank's logo , the square and circle which remind us of the bank's original logo.

Figure 13: Girl with iPad

Figure 14: Boy counting money

Another group of posters that may represent the same theme but were not part of the previous campaign are Figures 15 and 16. The first features a boy mounting his father's shoulders and using his hands to blind fold his father, while the father has risen his arms trying to support his son from falling. Both the son and his father are smiling and seem to be enjoying their time. The background in this poster shows a blue sky with some clouds which indicates a good weather. And both the father and his son are wearing white shirts and the boy is also wearing blue short jeans.

Figure 16 features a boy with his father trying to learn how to ride a scooter, while his father is trying to support his balance. They are all dressed in the Emirati costumes. In the background, we can see a blue skyline with some clouds, and the sea. We can also see a part of the parent's car which might be indicative of this family life style. It is also an indirect reference to one of the bank's services, or in other words: things that you might be able to secure for yourself and your family with the support of the bank. At the right top corner of the poster, we can see the bank's name and logo.

Figure 15: Father and son in casual apparel

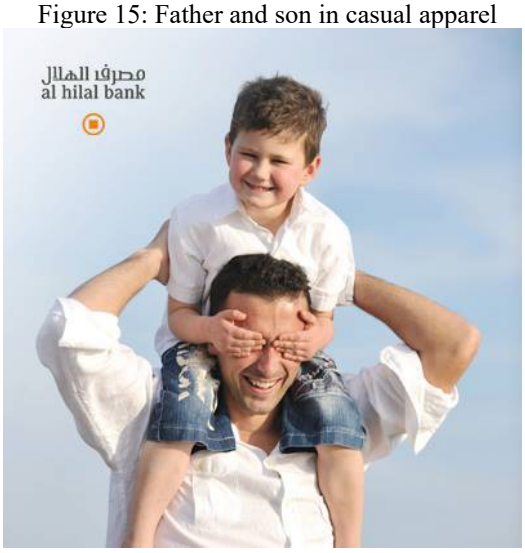


Figure 16; Father and son in Emirati apparel

7. Discussion

In the bank's advertisement campaigns intertextuality appeared to be a dominant feature starting from the slogan "it's all about you", and the bank's services, offers or deals became irrelevant. Therefore, in order to advertise for the bank you have to celebrate the customer's life and value what he believes to be important and valuable. The use of the direct address 'you' which has been considered as "one of the markers of informality which characterize modern advertising" (Fairclough 1992: 279) and to make it part of the bank's slogan and therefore identity marks the shift in this bank's discourse and its direction. In fact, the bank's slogan and logo have successfully granted the bank a flexible identity, to recreate itself based on the campaign, which revolves around the needs of their customers. In other words, choosing a slogan that says "it's all about you" has granted them an amount of flexibility, which makes them a continuation rather than a recreation, and therefore aligned with the vision of the bank.

According to Fairclough,

> Sectors of the economy outside commodity production are being drawn more and more into the commodity model and the matrix of consumerism, and are under pressure to "package" their activities as commodities and "sell" them to "consumers." This creates a particular difficulty for banks: To emulate consumer goods, their services must bow to the power of the consumer and be made attractive, simple, and maximally unconstrained; yet the peculiar nature of the "goods" on offer makes it imperative that consumers' access to them be controlled by rules and safeguards. (Fairclough 1992: 280)

In this case this relationship is developed even further, and instead of packaging a product to sell, the bank chose to conceal the product and invest in their personalized relationship with the consumer. This strategy grants the receiver more anatomy and power, and shifts 'authoritor' status to the consumer, and the goods the bank is trying to sell as an 'authoritee'[14] are not the bank's goods but rather a lifestyle or a concept.

However, it is also apparent that the bank's message was also selective in choosing its addressees and mostly targeted Emirati nationals. This is reflected through the visual semiotics:

14 Fairclough (1992:279) refers to a 'central contradiction' in the banking discourse in their "is the authority relation between bank and public: The bank is on the one hand the "authoritor" communicating regulations to an "authoritee," and on the other hand a producer (authoritee) trying to sell to a consumer (authoritor)."

costumes, the flag and the use of the National Day as a theme.

One of the interesting choices made in this campaign is the costumes chosen for these children; while none of the girls wore the national costumes, almost all of the boys wore the national costumes except in two posters. The first is Figure 12, in which the advertiser did not want to create a connotation or even a mental connection between being broke/out of money and being an Emirati, despite the obvious difference in the lifestyle between an Emirati and an expatriate, which makes Emiratis under a higher risk of having financial problems.

Intertextuality and interdiscursivity were also apparent in their posters that promote religious practice. None of these posters referred directly or indirectly to the bank. In fact they were all supporting one theme and that is how to be a good Muslim highlighting things that their customers can do as individuals. The missing connection between the bank as a financial institution and the promotion of religious practice is left to the audience or the customers to decode. By doing that the bank has managed to hide behind individual's ultimate goal, which makes it an alley or a source of support in one's quest to enhance their religious practice. In other words, if you want to become a better Muslim, then the bank is there for you to guide you and support you financially, perhaps through using their credit card to know the direction of the Mecca or even by offering you a loan to go to Hajj. This direction is also reinforced through the use of quotations, sources whether in the form of referring to highly respected celebrity, political or religious figures. These references were multi-semiotic and are represented through both text and imagery.

The use of theological discourse, which has been adopted in the last few years in political discourse, seems to be an alien in the discourses of banking and advertising. Through assigning a full campaign to celebrate Hajj, the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca and Ramadan seems to be another uncommon advertising methodology. The bank even went beyond that to use a combination of references represented by the prophet Mohamed's quotes and images and color tones that reinforces the spirituality of the occasion represented by the bright light an image of the sky or even parts of the Mecca's Mosque. By doing that, the bank did not just appeal emotionally to their customers, but they also distracted them from the bank's goal and that is to expand their margin of profit and keep them focused on the Hajj or Ramadan or a religious goal.

The use of emotional appeals can be seen as consistent method used in the bank's discourse, which shifts its discourse away from 'marketization' and 'conversationalisation' into the 'expert system', i.e. counseling and preaching. Consequently, the bank's role becomes more like a 'guardian' rather than a seller. If you are a good Muslim, then the bank will be there to support you, if you care about your kids, then the bank is also there to support you, and lastly, if you have a strong sense of nationalism and support the national team, then you will also find your bank there. This emotional appeal may have also extended to create a sense of guilt when they asked “How well do you know your kids?” A question that may make all parents feel guilty for not spending enough time with their kids. The actual questions they asked the kids are all related to the value of money, money management and their expenditure.[15] This question which was used as a slogan for this campaign could have been easily changed or rephrased to concentrate on the real questions or goal of the campaign rather than using a very general and yet sensitive question like the one they used.

This new relationship takes us back to what analysts referred to as a 'dilema' in the negotiation of power between the bank and its consumer. On one hand, consumers became more powerful with the introduction of this hybrid discourse to put together the message and to think the value of the bank through rather than bombarding them with the services and rates. On the other hand, the bank in this case did not dictate 'conditions of use', instead they took the role of a mentor or guardian, and established a connection between good virtue and their product. Consequently, as a consumer, you

15 Among the questions asked: what's the most important thing parents say about money? Where does money come from? Would you prefer wining 10,000 dirhams or an iPad? What would you do if I gave you 100 dirhams? And what does 'a lot of money' means?. 'How well do you know your kids?' (2013)

will seek their help, perhaps to prove your good virtue and therefore the bank removes from any financial competitions or race with any other banks to beat their interest rate and provide their customers with better benefits.

8. Conclusion

Al Hilal Bank has led a shift in the discourse of banking in the United Arab Emirates, and the fact that almost all their advertising campaigns opted for discussing anything but their services and "[i]nvesting on people's beliefs and even religious ideologies" (Tahmasbi & Kalkhajeh 2013: 129), is a proof of this shift. Banks like many other institutions have realized that the discourse that they have used in the last 20 years might have a similar impact on their current audiences. Due to the effect of globalization, and the social media which changed the way people communicate and their access to information. It also became more challenging for banks to make financial promises and to advertise any commitments through these advertisements even through the use of the tiny disclaimers usually used in such advertisements.

The bank did not just reconstruct its discourse but also changed the way banks are perceived, from being a financial institution to a partner who is there to provide their customers with as much support as they can to become better people and better citizens. Whilst doing that the question that might come to mind is what about the numbers: interest rates, profit rates and charges which remain hidden behind this bigger picture they appear to adopt.

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Corporate identity in a globalised world: A study of elements marking national identity on company websites

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Abstract: This paper presents a study of nationality used by companies as a positioning parameter in their market communication. The study takes its point of departure in the field of tension between globalisation and national identity in corporate communication. On the one hand, companies may see themselves as global players with no disposition to accentuate national affiliation. On the other hand, for many years, national origin has been used for the purpose of achieving a competitive advantage. In research, it has been questioned if this awareness of national origin will continue in the globalised world. The study focuses on the wind industry, analysing German, Danish, British and US American company websites, 256 in total. The analysis encompasses the use of national flags or colours, internet domain, language and reference to a specific country. In brief, the study shows that national identity is still, to some extent, being utilised as a positioning parameter. Danish websites in particular display elements marking national identity.

Keywords: Globalisation, Country of Origin, Corporate Identity, national identity, websites, Danish, German, British, US American.

1. Introduction

This paper deals with the application of nationality as a market positioning tool in an increasingly globalised world. The aim of the paper is to provide insight into the specific use of verbal and visual elements marking nationality in contemporary internationally oriented market communication.

In this first section, we provide background information for the study. We focus our attention on two aspects that we consider significant in market communication and market positioning. One aspect relates to the changing role of 'the national' in the course of globalisation. The other aspect addresses the way in which people respond to globalisation. Section two deals with our research question and text corpus. In sections three and four, we account for the theoretical background of the study covering central aspects of corporate identity and country of origin. Finally, we present the findings of the study in section 5 and round off the article in section 6.

Over the last 25 years, large parts of the world have experienced intensified technological, economic, social, political and cultural changes related to globalisation. Some of the dimensions of globalisation incorporate increased worldwide access and interconnectedness through digitalisation, world economy integration, and transnational corporation growth; but political transformations and cultural effects also form part of the globalisation processes. From a corporate point of view, globalisation places a high competitive pressure on companies; this is due to the emergence of a potentially large number of competitors on export markets as well as on home markets. Spreading knowledge geographically implies increased worldwide awareness of living standards and products and thus creates both global market opportunities and increased competition (Jessop 2002: 113). In other words, companies must position themselves in a way that differentiates them from competitors, for example by means of verbal or visual elements marking nationality. Other potential means of differentiation are for instance price and distribution network.

Nationality is losing ground, however. Globalisation has implied the weakening of the autonomy and power of nations (Beck 1999: 13). By the same token, globalisation can be defined as "the processes through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks" (Beck 2000: 11). In other words, "the national scale has lost its taken-for-granted primacy" (Jessop 2010:

55).

With regard to the way in which globalisation influences human behaviour, the process seems to contain varied and sometimes opposing tendencies. According to Robertson (1992), it is central to the understanding of globalisation processes and their ramifications that we consider the relationship between the universal and the particular. Robertson (1992: 97-100) presents the universalism-particularism issue as a relationship involving "direct attention *both* to particularity and difference *and* to universality and homogeneity" (Robertson 1992: 100 [italics in the original]). On the one hand, the increased worldwide interaction and interdependence have given rise to a demand for assimilating into the universal. Accordingly, it is plausible to assume that people tend to understand themselves more as citizens of the world and less as members of a nation, causing cultures to become more homogeneous across national boundaries. On the other hand, focus is, at the same time, on particularity and difference, implying a demand for adhering to the particular and focusing on differences between people, nations, traditions, views etc. In other words, globalisation contains both globalising and localising processes (Robertson 1992: 97-100; Jensen 2013: 129-130). Robertson states that these simultaneous processes should be considered as aligned rather than contrasted sets of interests (Robertson 1992: 97).

Concerning the applicability of nationality in market communication it is also an issue that in a world of great global density and complexity, multiculturality and polyethnicity, identifying the individual and collective selves and the individual and collective others (Robertson 1992: 98) is becoming increasingly difficult. It may seem problematic to make use of nationality as a parameter in market communication as this is based on rather clear and unambiguously positive country images. We therefore wish to explore the extent to which nationality is used in market communication in spite of its undefinable character.

2. Research question and text corpus

Based on the considerations above, we investigate *to what extent wind industry companies and companies related to the wind power industry emphasise nationality on their websites*. The study aims at identifying the extent to which companies choose to emphasise nationality in their corporate identity and to position themselves by means of parameters indicating the origin of the company or its products.

Our text corpus comprises corporate websites of companies within the wind industry and of subcontractors related to the wind industry such as suppliers of work clothes, technical equipment and services. The reasons for choosing the wind power industry as our object of study relate to three characteristics of this industry. First, the wind power industry plays an important part in connection with the energy transition plans in many countries; this is a consequence of global warming and dependence on fossil fuels. In Germany, the 'Energiewende' aims at completely transforming the energy supply system into an environment-friendly and energy-saving system at competitive prices (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2015). In the United Kingdom, the government has announced a national strategy for climate and energy called 'The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan' (HM Government 2009). In the United States, the U. S. Department of Energy has launched an Energy Transition Initiative in order to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions (U. S. Department of Energy 2015), and in Denmark, 'The Danish Climate Policy Plan' aims towards a low carbon society (Danish Energy Agency 2015). Consequently, the wind industry is generally regarded as an industry of the future which holds large market potentials.

Second, the wind power industry is a relatively young industry, which may therefore be less bound by traditions of using nationality in market communication. In certain industries such as the Danish food industry and the German car industry, Country of Origin indicators have been used intensively for many years, but their use may be less distinct in younger industries established in today's widely globalised world.

Third, many companies in this industry are global players operating abroad. This presents them with the need to develop an external market communication strategy and to consider which sales arguments work best. In this process, the question of emphasising or downplaying their national Country of Origin is often dealt with.

Our text corpus is composed by corporate websites, as these are the company's own carefully considered public presentation of its identity. More precisely, our corpus consists of 256 websites by exhibitors presenting at the WindEnergy exhibition in Hamburg in 2014[1], distributed on 100 German, 99 Danish, 42 British, and 15 US American websites. As for the Danish, British and US American websites, all of the listed exhibitors were included in the study. The German exhibitors counted 806 in total; we analysed the first 100 websites on the alphabetical list of German exhibitors.

3. Corporate Identity

The study's theoretical approach takes its starting point in the notion of Corporate Identity (CI); this is central to the understanding of organisational communication and market positioning. CI is a strategic manifestation of a company's "vision and mission, underpinned by the strategies which a corporation employs in its operations" (Melewar & Wooldridge 2001: 328). In other words, CI serves the purpose of identifying and profiling the company. This enables potential customers and others to differentiate this company from other companies that provide the same types of products and services (Herbst 2012: 34-35). Furthermore, CI is a precondition for creating sympathy, building confidence and trust (Herbst 2012: 118); such factors are necessary for creating loyal customers and business partners.

Even though there is general agreement that the notion of CI is useful, various understandings of CI exist. Researchers and practitioners have structured and used the concept in many different ways. Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2014) provide a comprehensive review and classification of important parts of the existing literature, proposing an integrative multidisciplinary approach to CI. In the early years, CI research focussed only on the visual representation of corporations, excluding other aspects of the company's identity. For many years now, research has commonly taken a more holistic view on identity, comprising more aspects of the company's personality (Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque 2014).

Nonetheless, some critical remarks have been phrased by researchers such as Bolten (2015: 87-88), who questions if it is at all possible or even relevant to focus on the long-lasting homogenous appearance of a company at a time when co-operations and strategic alliances are formed and terminated very rapidly. We find this criticism relevant, but we still consider CI a useful concept of orientation for the company stakeholders, when used as a dynamic rather than a fixed concept. CI provides stakeholders with a presentation of the company's profile, values and norms (Sander 2011: 553-554; Cornelissen 2014: 6, 7)[2].

The concept of CI is closely related to a number of different fields. Among other things, CI relates to corporate branding, as in some cases this takes an identity-based view (e.g. Balmer 2008). In Balmer (2012), for example, seven identities constitute the corporate brand constellation. These are actual identity as well as communicated, conceived, covenanted, cultural, ideal, and desired corporate brand identities. In other studies, CI has been replaced by the concept of branding, freeing it from the connection to the formerly used narrow focus on the visual elements of corporate

1 WindEnergy Hamburg – The global on- & offshore expo (http://we14.media-hmc.de/catalog/index.cfm). The nationality of the websites is evident from each entry in the list of exhibitors.

2 Cornelissen distinguishes between internal and external identity, using the notion 'organisational identity' for the internal identity and 'corporate identity' for the external identity (cf. Cornelissen 2014: 67). This distinction seems irrelevant as integration between the two is necessary in order to ensure that the identity is communicated consistently to all stakeholder groups.

personality (e.g. Olins 2004, 2008, 2014).

Furthermore, CI is closely connected to Corporate Image. Image is the picture of a company that stakeholders make in their minds; this picture is not rigidly fixed, but develops over time and can suddenly be changed if, for instance, mass media discover an important negative feature of the company (Herbst 2012: 117-126). Along the lines of Herbst (2012: 88), we regard image is as an integral part of CI. It is not simply a projection of CI, as stated in Birkigt et al. (2002), as the company itself cannot dictate its image. Stakeholders are influenced by other factors, too; for example by the information they receive from the media and from other stakeholders they know (Herbst 2012: 124). However, the company itself can influence the image to a certain degree by building a strong and unique CI.

Another field that plays an important part in connection with CI is organisational culture. Hatch & Schultz (1997) define organisational culture as "a context within which interpretations of organizational identity are formed and intentions to influence organizational image are formulated" (Hatch & Schultz 1997: 357). In this definition, we see that organisational culture is conceived of as not being part of the actual organisational identity, but as a context for it. Herbst (2012), on the other hand, sees corporate culture as the basis of the company personality and as a part of the CI. A company always has a company culture, he states, and mentions that the company culture can emerge from a national or regional culture (Herbst 2012: 88-91). Melewar & Jenkins (2002) agree that corporate culture is part of CI. According to them, CI consists of the combination of communication and visual identity (as one element), behaviour, corporate culture and the external factor market conditions (Melewar & Jenkins 2002: 81). Under the corporate culture, the subconstruct nationality is explicitly mentioned and situated along with organisational imagery and history, as well as goals, philosophies and principles (Melewar & Jenkins 2002: 81). Another classification is seen in Melewar & Karaosmanoglu (2006), where communication and design are separated, and corporate strategy and corporate structure are added as new elements (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006: 849). The element nationality, in their article referred to as "country-of-origin", is again situated under corporate culture along with other elements (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006: 849).

We regard CI as the company's understanding of its own personality (cf. Herbst 2012: 117), established on the basis of a unique company culture, including its values and focal points, company image, company "Leitbild" (ideal and promise to fulfil) as well as the instruments Corporate Design, Corporate Communication and Corporate Behaviour (Herbst 2012: 88, 107-115). Using these three instruments, a company can present a strong and unique CI. Corporate Design is, for example, the design of products, buildings and communication tools for print media, exhibitions, clothing etc. (Herbst 2012: 107-108). Corporate Communication encompasses for example advertising, PR and promotion (Herbst 2012: 112-114). Finally, Corporate Behaviour can be illustrated by the company's behaviour towards its employees, suppliers, customers, shareholders and other stakeholders such as the state, the general public and neighbours (Herbst 2012: 114-115).

On this basis, we will now proceed with a more detailed discussion of the concept of Country of Origin.

4. Country of Origin

Country of Origin (COO) is an instrument traditionally used by companies to mark their national identity, promote their products or services, gain a competitive advantage and create trust. In the past 20-30 years, researchers have discussed if COO has lost its meaning (cf. Jaffe & Nebenzahl 2006; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu 2006). Mai (2011) presents a comprehensive critical overview of the existing literature and the current state-of-the-art research in the field of COO effect, i.e. the effect of COO on buyers. He calls this research "ermüdend" (tiresome), because it is in many cases not fit for practice. Instead he suggests that researchers should turn to the examination of

companies' use of direct and indirect COO references in marketing and communication, which is yet scarce (Mai 2011: 112). This is what this study sets out to do.

As explained in section 1, the globalisation of markets and production has made it very difficult to hold on to the clear-cut notion of nationality, and similarly, to the classical notion of COO. In some industries, COO still has significance, because it helps people orientate themselves in relation to "place", identifying for them their own position in relation to their surroundings (Nielsen 2005: 155) and ensuring the quality, solidity and security of a company or product (Schefte 2015). Many examples can be found in market communication concerning for instance agricultural products and cars: The Danish jam producer Orkla Foods Denmark uses the Danish origin of the brand "Den gamle fabrik" (The Old Factory) intensively in their promotion, including the Danish flag and allusions to Danish summer (Den gamle fabrik 2015). Similarly, for several years, the German car manufacturer Volkswagen has made use of the generic slogan "Das Auto", not only in Germany but also internationally (Volkswagen 2015). The question we raise in this paper is if COO is also used in the wind industry.

An example that shows the potentially large influence of COO can be seen in the Volkswagen emissions scandal that developed in the autumn of 2015. Volkswagen, the greatest car producer in Europe, had installed illicit software concealing the real emissions of their cars in more than 11 million produced cars, thus cheating on emissions tests – and thereby cheating customers and authorities as regards environmental protection. This inspired a discussion in the media that the scandal would damage not only Volkswagen and the car industry, but also the classical notion of "Made in Germany" and not least the trust by consumers and authorities in the quality that this notion represents. It might in fact even threaten the German economy (Lind 2015).

An interesting trend, observed by Schuhmacher (2003), is that some companies do not highlight their country anymore, but instead the producer or the brand itself. This means that some companies do not use the term "Made in", but instead "Made by" or "Made for" (Bolten 2015: 52). This might be one solution to the problem of hybrid products with a globalised production process. A product may, for instance, be designed in Denmark, some of its parts are made in Germany and China, and they are all assembled in Poland and sold in Britain (cf. Jaffe & Nebenzahl 2006: 115-116). An example of the use of the "Made by" concept is the following text on the website of the German car producer BMW Group: "The same consistent standards of quality, safety, and processes at all locations guarantee worldwide premium products "made by BMW Group"" (BMW 2015). Another example can be found on the website of the Danish skin care producer and retailer Matas. This firm uses the slogan "Made by Matas – We made the choices for you, in order for you to be safe" to promote the products produced by themselves (Matas 2015). Another illustrative case is the Danish fashion brand NN07, whose logo consists of the brand name NN07 and "NO NATIONALITY". On the website of the company, the text says explicitly "We are NO NATIONALITY", which marks a clear statement. These examples suggest that the companies conceive of themselves as a guarantee and a source of security for the customers.

As a solution to the problem of the differentiated Country-of-Origin elements, Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006)[3] suggest a more sophisticated taxonomy for hybrid products than pure affiliation to one country; they distinguish six categories. Based on our previous empirical research (cf. Larsen & Pedersen 2016), we suggest that a new category be added to their taxonomy, namely "Quality ensured in Country".

3 In Mai (2011) we find other category terms related to differentiating the elements of hybrid products with roughly the same contents as in the description by Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006).

Table 1: Extended COO-taxonomy (based on Jaffe & Nebenzahl 2006: 28-32; Nielsen 2005)

HC - Home Country	The country in which the consumer permanently resides.
DC - Designed-in Country	The country in which either a part of or the entire finished product is designed.
MC - Made-in Country	The country whose name appears on the "made-in" label […] usually where final production takes place.
PC - Parts-made-in Country	The country that is the source of identified key parts or components.
AC - Assembled-in Country	The country where final assembly takes place.
OC - Country of Origin	The country which a consumer associates with a certain product or brand.
QC - Quality ensured in Country	The country in which the quality of a product has been approved.

This addition is based on our study of Danish and German websites (Larsen & Pedersen 2016); we found the following example of a German company (ALTHOM) making a reference to the quality and its uncompromising stance in this field: "Keine Kompromisse – Quality ensured in Germany". This statement is used to illustrate that the quality of a product has been checked in a country with apparently high quality standards. The reason for doing so is to make it clear to customers and others that the product does in fact meet these high standards, although it might have been produced in another country which is not known for having the same high standards. It may be argued, however, that this statement is in itself a compromise: As the company cannot vouch for the "Made in Germany" quality, because parts are produces or assembled in other countries, it only states that the quality control has taken place in Germany.

This is not comparable to the strategy by which companies simply ascribe to their products the identity of other nations with a stronger and more positive image than their own through associations that are created for example through brand or product names ("Borrowed Origin") (Mai 2011: 107). The British coffee and sandwich shop chain Pret A Manger (Mai 2011: 107), also known as Pret, might serve as an example of a company indicating foreign origin in its brand name; in this case the name connects to the famous French cuisine. We will now turn to the indicators that signal COO.

A study by Djursaa et al. (1991) indicates that a company's use of COO might change over time. The study shows that some Danish companies use COO in the first phases of their export marketing in Britain, in order to quickly establish an identity, drawing on the positive features of Denmark's image; they call this "waving the flag". Later on, when the companies are well established on the market, they emphasise their individual brand identity instead, and reduce their use of COO. This is the case with the windmill producer who was interviewed in the study.

From the research literature, it is not clear if the globalisation of markets and companies renders national identity more or less important for the companies. In Melewar & Jenkins (2002) it is presumed that the importance of COO is rising: "As companies expand their global operations, the role of the nationality of the company and its perceived attributes have become more important" (Melewar & Jenkins 2002: 84). As opposed to this, Melewar & Karaosmanoglu (2006: 856) show that most company representatives responding say that COO has an impact on company culture, but also that the importance is less distinct in internationally operating companies, and that the importance is generally declining because of globalisation.

Not all nationalities have always been strongly associated with product attributes by all customers. A study mentioned in Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006) showed that the perceived attributes connected to German products were very strong; Germany was associated with quality, solidity,

reliability and after sales service by German, French and Italian respondents of the study. In contrast to this, the respondents generally ranked Great Britain and the United States very low as regards product association; the United States is only weakly associated with technology, and Great Britain only very weakly with style (Jaffe & Nebenzahl 2006: 83). In the latest Anholt Nation Brands Index from November 2015, however, the United States, Germany and Great Britain are all in the Top 3 of nation brands, whereas Denmark is not in the Top 10. The position of the countries in this index is not only restricted to product association, but also includes governance, culture, people, tourism and immigration/investment; therefore, the index is only partly relevant in this connection (GfK 2015). Niss (1996) mentions that "Made in Denmark" connotes high quality and innovation in product development and design, but also that not all foreign customers share these positive associations. Many customers have no knowledge of what Denmark is (Niss 1996: 14) and would not be able to associate any attributes with the COO. Therefore, Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006) propose that Denmark's positive country image should be used more to improve brand awareness in some product categories which reflect a "match" between country image and product category, for example windmills (Jaffe & Nebenzahl 2006: 128-129).

4.1. Country of Origin indicators

In order to select the focal points of the present study, we will turn to the indicators that signal COO. Papadopoulos (1993) states that not only the "Made in" concept has a significance, but also brand names and company names, slogans, etc. can show the affiliation of a company. In research, many different factors have been analysed. Nielsen (2005), for example, conducted a study of the use of COO by Danish companies. His findings suggest a scale of elements going from weak to strong indication of COO affiliation. He sees a weak affiliation, at one end of the scale, in the form of company names including the Danish letters *æ, ø, å* and company names with *Dan-* or *Scan-*. At the other end of the scale, a strong affiliation is seen in the form of slogans emphasising nationality, nationality being thematised extensively in the company and product presentation and a distinctly national brand identity[4]. Mai (2011: 108) registers a list of direct and indirect references through "Made in" labelling, brand names, pictures, language, music, geographic entities (i.e. cities, regions, nations and supranational entities), referring to Stich (1997: 19). Singh & Pereira (2005) have examined 36 elements of very different types that reflect the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (1980) and Hall (1976), for instance personalisation, information on company hierarchy, terms of sale, symbols of national identity, mentioning of awards and superlatives. In the present study, however, we wish to examine elements that can indicate national affiliation, not cultural dimensions.

Based on the literature review above, we have conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of selected COO indicators. These indicators have been chosen because of their clear signalling of national affiliation. First, we have selected the *use of national flag and colours of the flag*. This is a very direct form of marking national affiliation, associated explicitly with national boundaries. This use of the flag is seen in other industries, for example in the promotion of Danish and German food products.

Second, we have chosen *language options on the website.* The chosen language(s) might signal how the company sees its own identity, as globalised or rather localised. If for example the website of a German or Danish company is only accessible in the national language, this might point to a more nationally oriented identity of the company. In contrast, if the company only maintains a website in English, this might be indicative of a more internationally oriented identity.

Third, the indicator *top level domain* has been selected. The top level domain is seen in the address of the company website. It indicates affiliation to a state (e.g. 'dk' for Denmark, "uk" for Britain, and "de" for Germany) or a function (e.g. 'com' for commercial). As opposed to the

4 See also Adriansen (2003) for an overview over Danish national symbols.

national domains of Denmark, Britain and Germany, there is no equivalent top level domain for the US American companies.

Last but not least, *references to the country in which the company is situated* are examined in this study. In this category, explicit references to the company's US American, British, German or Danish origin or position are examined. Regional or local affiliations are not included in this paper, because these express other types of affiliation.

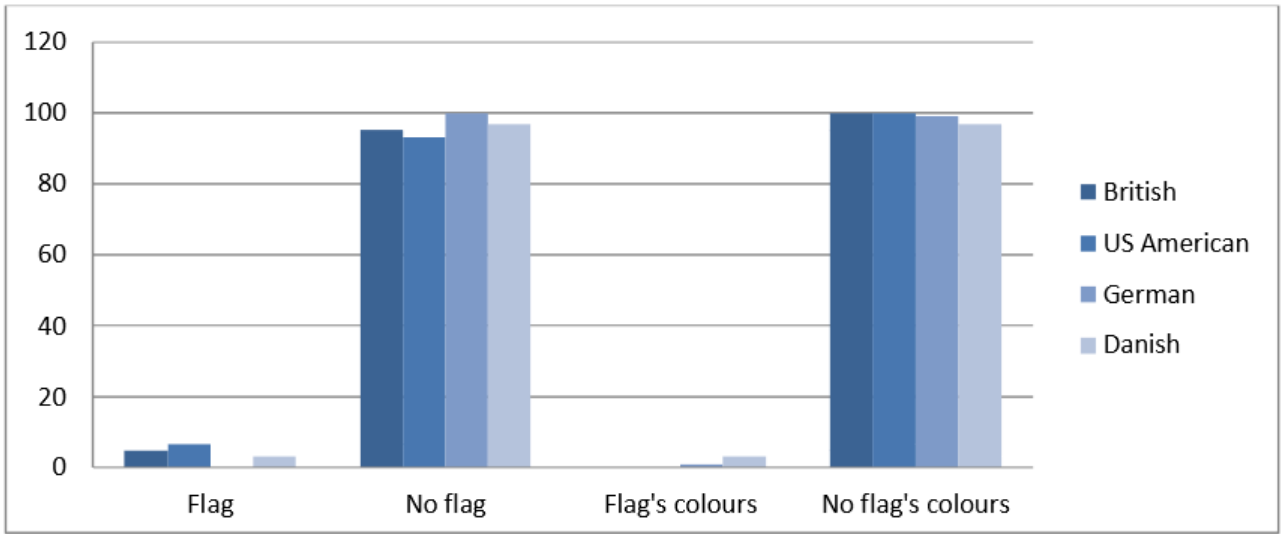
5. Findings

As mentioned in section 2, we have examined corporate websites of companies related to the wind industry. For reasons of limitation, we have focused primarily on the website parts containing company profile and slogan; this is due to their comprised depiction of corporate identity. Of the indicators chosen for this study, the first three turned out to be of rather limited information value. Therefore, we will start by commenting briefly on the use of national flags or colours, internet domain and language choice on the website; subsequently, we will concentrate more thoroughly on the fourth category; references. The figures in the following section show the percentage of occurrence of the indicators, distributed on the declared nationalities of the companies in our corpus. Additionally, we will give examples of the concrete use of references.

5.1. National flag and colours

The first indicator is *use of national flag and colours of the flag*. There is very little use of "waving the flag", as Djursaa et al. (1991) call it. National flags and the flag colours are almost absent on the analysed websites. Three of the Danish companies make use of the national flag; two of the British companies and one of the US American companies do so. None of the German companies use the German flag on their website. The picture is quite similar when it comes to the use of the colours of the flags. Only one of the German companies and three of the Danish companies make use of the colours of the flag, while neither the British nor the US American companies do so. In the very few instances where flags or flag colours are used on the websites, this is almost exclusively seen in connection with a "Made in" sign.

Figure 1: Use of national flag and colours of the flag (percentages)

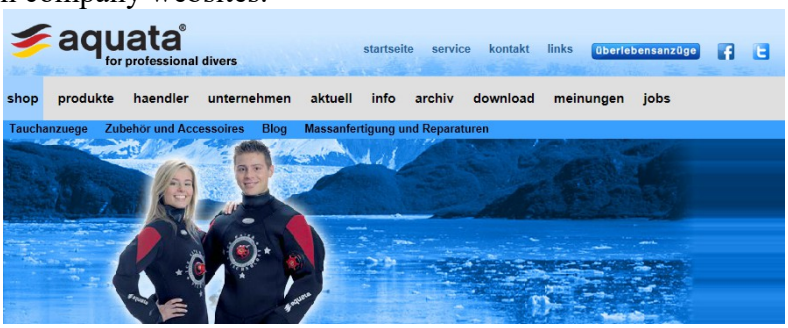


An exceptional example of a more discrete use of the colours of the German flag (black-red-gold) can be seen in (1). Here, the German manufacturer of diving suits, aquata Produktions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH, has placed small waves in the national colours at the top left corner

next to the name of the company. Although this indicates the national affiliation of the company, this use of the colours of the flag seems more like a visual design-related item. Additionally, COO is not emphasised elsewhere on this company's website.

On some websites, we see a different use of national flags; i.e. flags indicating the language(s) offered on the website. This use seems to have no relation to the company's national affiliation, but a reception or production analyses would be needed to provide solid information on this topic. An example of this can be seen in (2), where flags are shown along with the languages offered on the website. Interestingly, we note that the Brazilian flag is shown to signal the Portuguese language, and that the American flag is shown as a signal of the English language. The latter is not seen on the British company websites.

(1)



The fact that the traditional, very simple marking of national affiliation through the use of the national flag was almost completely absent is a so-called non-significant result (Mai 2011: 114). Apart from providing insights into the practice of companies, it gives us a methodological foundation for dealing with this indicator in our further research, where it can be given less attention.

5.2. Language options

The second indicator in this study is *language options on the website*. Here, we see two different tendencies. One applies to most of the Danish and German companies, which offer the information in their national language as well as in at least one other language, mostly English. The other tendency applies to many British and American companies, which only offer their information in English. It also applies to some German (8 %) and a large part of the Danish companies (34 %), which do not have a German or a Danish website version, respectively, but only an English version. This reflects the special position of English as a *lingua franca* for communication among people from different countries, but for companies not based in an English speaking country it may also be interpreted as a signal of a more global, universalistic orientation.

From a linguistic point of view, it was also interesting to see that many companies offer their information in various languages. However, automatic translation systems like "Google Translate" or others were frequently used for generating the texts.

5.3. Top level domain

The third indicator is *top level domain*. The top level domains used by the Danish and German companies are usually ".com" or the domain of their country. The distribution of national and international top level domains differs slightly among the two countries. More than half (53 %) of the Danish websites use ".com", and 42 % use the Danish top level domain ".dk". Of the German websites more than half (55 %) are registered under the German top level domain ".de" and 38 % under ".com". The British companies employ mostly ".com" (69 %) and to a lesser extent ".uk" (24 %). As mentioned above, no national top level domain is seen for the US American companies. Consequently, a large majority (87 %) of these companies use ".com". Only very few of the

analysed companies in all four countries use other top level domains such as ".eu", ".org", ".aero", ".io", and ".net".

Figure 2: Language options on the website (percentages)

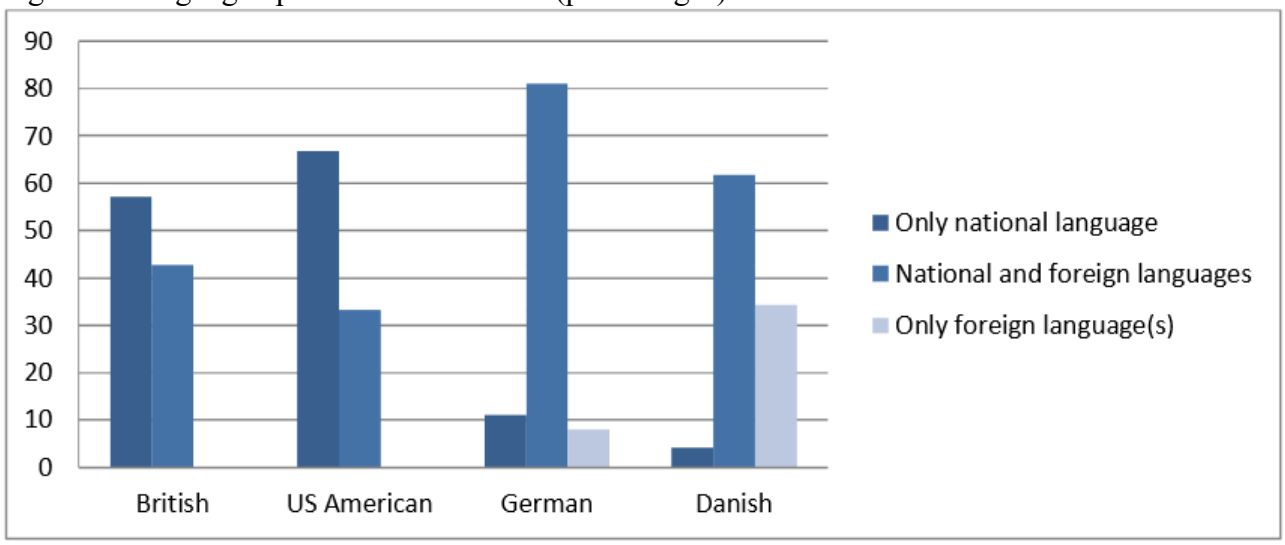
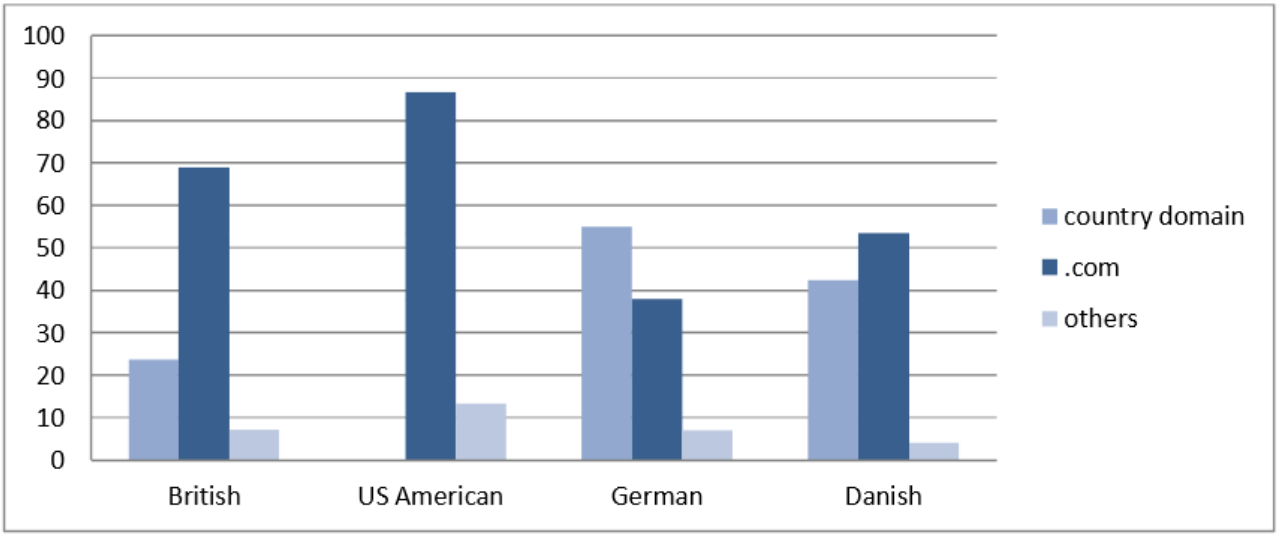


Figure 3: Top level domain (percentages)



An example showing the features *language options* and *top level domain* is seen in the front page of the website by the German company August Friedberg GmbH shown below. In this example (2), we see the top level domain ".com", and we find four languages represented: German, English, Portuguese and Korean, as well as a short welcome text in each language (on the left side of the page).

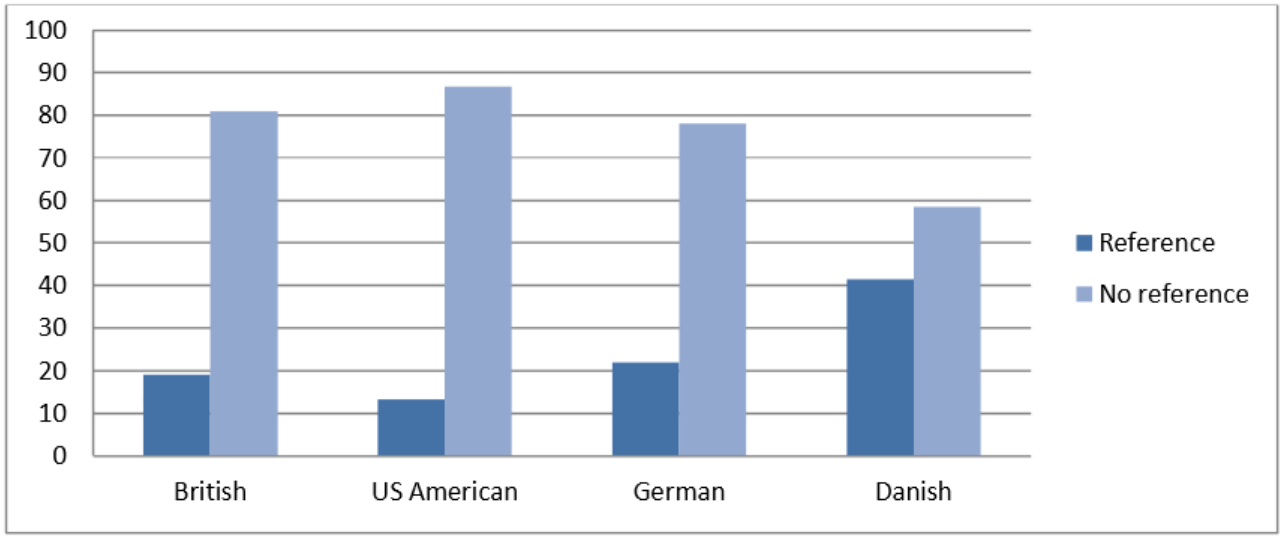
(2)

Similarly to the analysis of flags, the analysis of the top level domain produces data of limited value and represents methodological limitations. As the US American companies do not have the possibility of choosing a national top level domain, this indicator is not relevant for signalling COO in this group. Still, the 'missing' ".us." is a particular case, which does not reduce the value of the indicator as such. When comparing the findings regarding the British, German and Danish companies, it becomes clear that 55 % of the German and 42% of the Danish companies have chosen a domain name that signals national affiliation, whereas this applies to only 24 % of the British. The study also shows that the majority of the British and Danish companies favour ".com", whereas the German companies choose ".de" over ".com".

5.4. Reference to country

The fourth indicator includes *reference to the country in which the company is situated,* meaning Britain, USA, Germany and Denmark. In the bar chart, we see that only a minority of the US American (13 %), British (19 %) and German (22 %) companies make references to their COO, whereas a large part of the Danish (41 %) companies do so.

Figure 4: Reference to British, US American, German and Danish origin



In most cases, references are made in a very brief way. Examples of this are found on the websites which merely mention that the company is Danish (DSV) or that its headquarters are located in Denmark (HOVE). By the same token, a quote like the following refers to the company's start in

Denmark: "Established in Denmark in 1933, today DEIF is a global supplier of green, safe and reliable control solutions for decentralised power production, marine & offshore and wind turbines." (DEIF [underlining in the original]). In addition to the part marking COO, we see here the accentuation of the company's global orientation. We have seen this combination of national origin and global orientation on several of the Danish websites. A different wording of the same twofold statement is presented on the website of APRO Wind A/S (3): "Danish offshore wind expertise travels the world" on the front page. This explicit thematisation of the company's Danish origin is combined with a predominant position of one map showing the places of business and another map showing the world, signalling the company's global activities.

(3)

In the following quote, we see an elaboration of characteristics connected to the "Made in" label which is rather unusual. Here, the German company alki TECHNIK GmbH first informs the reader about the values and characteristics of its brand and products. Subsequently, a very clear reference is made to the "Made in Germany" concept. It is stated that the company's products embody the classic characteristics of the "Made in Germany" quality, and that they represent high quality and accurate equipment, thus meeting the highest standard demands.

Furthermore, the company is proud of its many years of experience and its customer oriented partnership.

> "Unsere alkitronic Produkte kommen in allen industriellen Branchen zum Einsatz, welche Wert auf ein hohes Maß an Präzision und Qualität legen. Dazu zählen u.a. Kraftwerke, Chemieanlagen, Bergbau, Stahlbau, Schwermaschinenbau und neue Umwelttechnologien wie Windparks. Durch ein weltweites Service- und Vertriebsnetz unterstützen wir unsere Kunden vor Ort. alkitronic steht für höchste Ansprüche, langjährige Erfahrung sowie kundenorientierte Partnerschaft und verkörpert die klassischen Eigenschaften der "Made in Germany" Qualität."

Another interesting example of elaboration and distinction is evident from the website of the British company Silver Fox (4). Here we see a clear distinction between the labels "UK Brand" and "UK Made", which relates to the discussion of whether nationality can be applied for promoting products that are not actually made in the country in question. In this case, the company supports differentiation between mere branding through nationality and actual national production and the qualities associated with the latter: "Silver Fox is not just a UK Brand, it is also UK Made". Moreover, in the successive sentence, the meaning of "UK Made" is explained; the customer can be

certain about quality and consistency, and the company can be reactive for its deliveries and cooperate with the customer on special requirements.

The Silver Fox Brand

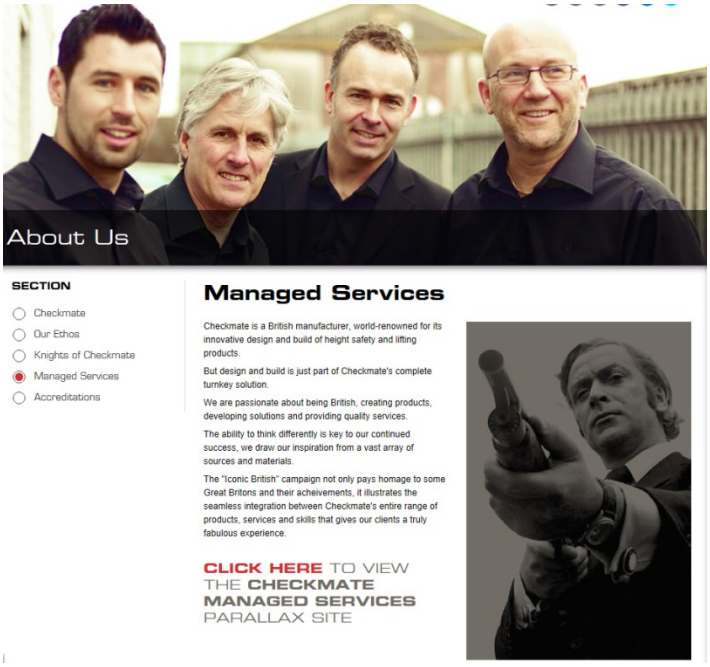
Silver Fox is not just a UK Brand it is also UK Made.

This means you can be sure about our quality and consistency. It also means we can be far more reactive for your delivery and work with you on any special requirements you might have for your particular project.

We understand – Silver Fox solutions have been designed and developed to ensure your finished job not only looks good and lasts the course but has saved you significant time in the process.

(4)

The explication of the British COO characteristics can also be observed on the website of the British company Checkmate (5), where a very specific reference to Britain and being British is made.



(5)

The company claims to be world-renowned for its innovative design and build and states that these two elements are only part of the company's complete turnkey solution. Its British identity is also an important element for the company: "We are passionate about being British, creating products, developing solutions and providing quality services. The ability to think differently is key to our continued success, we draw our inspiration from a vast array of sources and materials." In other words, design and innovation, quality and the ability to think differently are important for the company, as well as the pride it takes in being British. A clear correlation between being British and being able to think differently when creating products and developing solutions and providing quality services is stipulated. Furthermore, an iconic picture from the British film "Get Carter"

(1971) of Sir Michael Caine holding a shotgun is presented on the website as part of a campaign launched by the company as the "Iconic British" campaign. A link leads to another website (the "parallax site") by the company, presenting the campaign. On this website, the introductory text is repeated and further explanatory texts are displayed, along with photos of a Spitfire, an Aston Martin, St Pauls Cathedral, Twiggy and Sir Michael Caine in "Get Carter". The campaign pays homage to "some Great Britons and their achievements" and – according to the text on the websites – illustrates the "seamless integration" between the company's "entire range of products, services and skills that gives our clients a truly fabulous experience".

With regard to the new category, "Quality ensured in Country", we wish to add to the taxonomy by Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006) a single example which was also found in this study. The US American company (Dr. Shrink) (6) makes a direct reference to the "Made in" concept and relates it, on the same electronic 'label' on the company website, to quality assurance. The parameter emphasises its quality focus as a characteristic of the company.

(6) 

Even though we have now displayed a number of examples of the use of COO, it is important to state that only a minority of the companies studied make extensive use of COO. This places them to the far right on the COO scale of Nielsen (2005), causing them to stand out from the others. Paradoxically, it seems that the supposedly outdated application of COO occurs in such small numbers that it functions as a differentiation parameter, supporting a high-profile CI for these companies.

Comparing the country references in all four groups, we find that there is a marked difference between the Danish companies and the companies from the other three countries. Danish companies tend to use COO far more often than do the other companies, although in most cases, the use of COO is predominantly non-extensive, stating merely for instance that the company has its headquarters in Denmark. Only a minority of all analysed company websites use COO; however, a large minority of the Danish companies. It is also worth mentioning that as many as 25 out of 99 Danish websites reflect no elements marking nationality. These websites use ".com" and communicate almost exclusively in English.

6. Concluding remarks

In summary, the present study shows that COO plays a role, especially among Danish companies, in spite of globalisation and in spite of the fact that the complex present-day production processes often involve different countries. It is worth noticing that only a minority of the companies signal COO in terms of the traditional "Made in" country construction, and that some companies question the validity of this label and relativise it by emphasising "not just UK Brand but UK Made". The main result of our study is, however, that the companies in the wind industry do not use COO as a positioning parameter, even though the examples discussed above may leave the opposite impression.

Bearing the universalism-particularism issue in mind (cf. section 1), we see that the behaviour of Danish companies differs from that of companies in the other countries studied in that they show both tendencies, separately and in combination. One fourth of the Danish companies demonstrate no affiliation with Denmark and thus seem to align with the universalism tendency. However, the

Danish companies which do mark their nationality are in line with the tendency towards particularism. A third group combine the two in mentioning both their Danish origin and their global orientation. The other three website groups reflect little use of nationality and seem to a larger extent to be 'globalised'.

It seems logical to ask why this trend is seen in Danish companies; what do they wish to signal by using COO in this way, and what exactly are they hoping or expecting to achieve by doing so. We would assume that in carefully prepared profile texts on a company website, the companies would not use COO if they thought this use would be disadvantageous to them; however, our analysis does not suggest any specific conclusion to this question. Therefore, this would be a very interesting focal point in further research. An investigation into this topic would involve interviews with or questionnaires to companies which make use of COO as well as with other companies which do not. Mai (2011: 100) presents a paradox: on the one hand, if the customers know more about the product and consider other product characteristics – and we can assume that they do so in connection with products like these – COO is less important. On the other hand, in case of technically complex products that are expensive to purchase, it is more likely that customers consider COO as an aspect of interest. This paradox makes further research even more recommended.

In addition to our concrete findings concerning elements marking nationality, the study suggests a theoretical extension of the field of CI expressed through COO. Thus, supported by the findings in our present and previous studies, we propose the addition of a new category to the taxonomy created by Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006) describing a new aspect of contemporary companies' use of COO. By adding the category "Quality ensured in country" to this taxonomy, we draw attention to the fact that in their marketing communication, companies sometimes find it expedient to focus on the connection of their products with a specific country known for the quality of its production. They do so by mentioning that the quality has been controlled in the country in question. Thereby they relate the product to the product quality level of this country. They do not suggest, however, that the product was in fact produced in that particular country, but a connection to a specific country is established which draws on the positive connotations attached to it. As only rather old studies in this field exist, e.g. Djursaa et al. (1991) and Jaffe & Nebenzahl (2006), further research would be desirable.

One might say that companies which use COO differentiate themselves from other companies through this feature. The other companies, however, emphasise a number of rather uniform parameters to describe themselves; for example quality, experience, innovation, expertise and leadership. This means that their profiles do not differ significantly from each other. We also see from this study that some companies combine COO with the above parameters, thereby claiming that a relationship exists between these and the particular characteristics of the country in question.

The parameters applied by many companies in the present survey to signal their CI are concentrated on the following aspects[5]: Quality (Cooper and Turner Limited), including certificates to prove the quality, flexibility (Lind Jensens Maskinfabrik A/S), international experience (BerlinWind GmbH) and worldwide activities (anemos-jacob GmbH), partnership with the customers (Adolf Würth GmbH & Co. KG), knowhow (ABE Betriebsführung GmbH) and expertise (ROVOP Ltd.), many years of experience in the industry (MPI Offshore Ltd.), innovation (BGB Engineering Ltd.), setting standards (Pompanette LLC) and first-class service (Eve Trakway Limited).

The companies in the survey present one or several of the above parameters as their special characteristics. The presentations of the different companies are in fact very similar, which means

5 Only one company is mentioned at each parameter, but the element is found at many other company websites in the survey.

that to a large extent, the companies seek to promote themselves using the same parameters. These similarities are not optimal if the customers are to distinguish between different product providers.

Another aspect which is often stressed by companies is that they are leading in their particular niche or industry, e.g. “award-winning leadership in the industry since 1970” (AIMCO), “leading global supplier” (Flash Technology), “a leading provider of…” (JDR Cable Systems), “führende Position” (ATM Anlagen Termin Montage Hartmann GmbH). In some cases, this information is relativised or supplemented by the addition of the area in which the company is leading, e.g. “führender internationaler Anbieter” (ARCADIS Deutschland GmbH), “Europe’s leading” (Certex A/S), “one of the world’s leading” (Fred. Olsen Windcarrier), “arguably the UK’s No. 1 repair facility for…” (Alicat Workboats). Leadership is, of course, connected to the parameters mentioned above; a company would hardly see itself as being in a leading position if it did not possess some of the qualities mentioned, but in quite a few cases, the basis of the alleged leadership is not explained explicitly on the websites.

In what ways the use of COO and of other parameters influence the decision-making processes of stakeholders, e.g. customers, is still an open question. Although numerous studies have been conducted in this field, it appears very difficult to investigate this question and to obtain a credible answer (see Mai 2011). It might be that more complex high-cost products require so much knowledge on the part of the customer that COO is less important. However, if products are easily comparable, COO may be a deciding factor.

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Discursive legitimation in online crowdfunding: A study of Kickstarter projects promoting human rights

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Abstract: The internet-based crowdfunding platforms have in many ways changed the way projects are nowadays funded. Apart from opening to the small businesses, it has created funding opportunities for non-governmental organisations, citizens' initiatives, non-formal groups and individual projects, which used to have rather limited access to this sort of resources. However, the widening and liberalisation of the market poses new challenges for these entities as well – the project ideas have to be effectively elaborated in order to stand out from the crowd, reach the potential supporters and persuade them to get engaged with the project. This paper explored the discursive practices in crowdfunding for human rights projects, with particular focus on discursive strategies employed in project descriptions on the crowdfunding platforms Kickstarter. Within the discourse analysis framework, the study addressed the various strategies employed in the legitimation of social action (van Leeuwen 2008), in this case, donating money or otherwise supporting the projects. The findings suggest that rationalisation and appealing to morality are most frequently used to legitimise the social action of crowdfunding on online platforms. The research into discourse of crowdfunding highlights the current tendencies employed for engaging the potential contributors, but also reveals how the crowdfunding and human rights activism are socially constructed on online platforms like Kickstarter.

Keywords: Online crowdfunding, human rights, legitimation strategies, discourse analysis, corpus methods.

1. Introduction

Digital technology has changed not only the communication aspect of our lives but also the way people do business. Online platforms have made crowdsourcing, especially crowdfunding, fairly simple and accessible to a wide range of individuals or groups with ideas for new projects. Unlike with the traditional forms of funding, they do not need to go through lengthy administrative procedures with banks or potential investors. Operating online platforms and setting up crowdfunding calls can be done quickly and the project creator can raise fund within days. A lot of research into online crowdfunding has looked at it economic and financial aspects, psychological and behaviour background of the process, but few studies have addressed the discursive aspect of online crowdfunding. Likewise, human rights activism in the context of online crowdfunding has been underrepresented in research.

This paper approaches the online crowdfunding practice from the perspective of discourse analysis. In particular, I focus on the discursive strategies used to legitimise crowdfunding in projects related to human rights set up on the Kickstarter platform. Drawing on van Leeuwen's (2008) model of social legitimation, I have explored the projects' descriptions to see which legitimation strategies have been applied by the project creators and how. The first section of this paper provides an overview of the phenomenon of online crowdfunding and recent studies in the field. Van Leeuwen's (2008) model of discursive legitimation is then presented, as well as some of its elaborations and applications. Following this, I outline the research design of my study, introducing the methodology, tools and data used. Finally, the key findings of the study are presented and discussed.

2. The practice of online crowdfunding

2.1. Development and significance

Crowdfunding, in some of its forms, has been present for a long time in the process of starting a

business. Many entrepreneurs have asked for and relied on the help of numerous supporters, mostly family members and friends, offering small-scale investments, rather than having their own starting capital or taking a credit from the bank. This can be challenging and new businesses often fail to secure the necessary funding (Hellmann 2007; Casamatta & Haritchabalet 2013). Crowdfunding, therefore, might offer a viable alternative for reaching a larger number of potential supporter and eventually securing the funds needed for one's project. The term itself can be addressed within the wider notion of *crowdsourcing*, which was first used by Michael Sullivan in 2006, to refer to using the crowd, rather than a single investor, to gain resources necessary for business development, from ideas and feedback, to financial support (Howe 2008). Online crowdfunding is focused primarily on the latter and takes place via computer-mediated communication channels.

It is important to note that the term is used as an umbrella term for various forms of crowdfunding. The two primary types of crowdfunding are *rewards-based crowdfunding*, where project creators pre-sell a particular product or service, and *equity crowdfunding*, in which supporters are provided with shares or part of rights in exchange for their investment. Another type is *debt-based crowdfunding*, or peer-to-peer lending, which is built around a large number of mostly unsecured personal loans. *Litigation* is a type of crowdfunding where project creators ask for and receive donations, possibly providing rewards in return, the latter varying in value, and sometimes depending on the overall success of the project. Finally, crowdfunding can be exclusively *charitable* too, referring to funders supporting charity-related projects. Apart from the financial support, project creators often welcome feedback and suggestions regarding their proposals and, in some cases, voluntary help, although this is not in the primary focus of this type of ventures.

Crowdfunding might be seen as democratising the process of business development, as it effectively enables a wider participation and offers the project creators with new opportunities to reach potential supporters, without having to rely on the strict bank and investing bodies' policies, and overcoming, for example, the distance or gender-based gaps they might be otherwise facing. The geography of crowdfunding has been of particular interest to the researchers. Due to the virtual environment, it is expected that crowdfunding enables the project creators to bridge the geographical distances and reach potential supporters from all over the world. However, it should be noted that some of the platforms (e.g. Kickstarter, IndieGoGo) are open to the projects based or managed from certain countries only, while donations and support are not limited in this way. Furthermore, studies in online crowdfunding have shown that majority of early investors are actually fairly local to the project creators (cf. Sohl 1999; Wong 2002; Mason 2007). Agrawal et al.'s (2011) study of Sellaban, a Netherlands-based online crowdfunding platform specialised for supporting musicians producing their first album album, has however shown "that investment patterns over time are independent of geographic distance between artist and investor after controlling for the artist's offline social network" and, furthermore indicated that "online mechanisms can reduce economic frictions associated with investing in early-stage projects over long distances (Agrawal et al. 2011: 15). A more recent study by Lin & Vinwasathan (2014) investigated if funders on online crowdfunding platforms exhibited home bias. They have focused on Proseper.com, one of the largest peer-to-peer lending platforms in the US, and the findings from the quasi-experiment they conducted show that home bias still exists, and that there is evidence to support behavioural, rather than rational, motivation for such investing patterns.

In relation to factors like gender, some studies (Radford 2015) suggest the replication of institutionalised gender discrimination on the crowdfunding platform following the publication of actors' gender, while others (Marom et al. 2015) indicate that, while online crowdfunding does not annihilate the gender-based obstacles women project creators often encounter but, with Kickstarter projects "[w]omen are 35% of the project leaders and 44% of the investors on the platform and are concentrated in specific sectors, … enjoy higher rates of success" (Marom et al. 2015: 3). Such findings indicate the opportunities online crowdfunding platforms offer for expansion of women's

participation in project leadership.

Motivation is probably one of the most interesting elements of crowdfunding research. A model is proposed by Wang & Fesenmaier (2003) and based on communities of online sharing, they suggest five categories of motivation, including instrumental, efficacy, quality, assurance, status, and expectancy. Recent studies by Gerber et al. (2012) and Gerber & Hui (2013) were focused in particular on motivation for participation in online crowdfunding practices, both raising and giving donation. Semi-structured interviews revealed that "[c]reators are motivated to participate to raise funds, receive validation, connect with others, replicate successful experiences of others, and expand awareness of work through social media", whereas "[f]unders are motivated to participate in order to seek rewards, support creators and causes, and strengthen connections with people in their social networks" (Gerber et al. 2012: 8).

Crowdfunding has been used in many different disciplines and sectors. In some of the previous studies, Vasileiadou et al. (2014) have, for example, researched the crowdfunding niche for projects related to the use of renewable energy, as a means of sealing the gap supply and demand in funding of energy transition models. Their study reveals relatively low volume of crowdfunding and high dependence on governmental market support, but also predicts the growth of crowdfunding in areas where little or no structural support is available for projects and initiatives developing renewables. Wheat et al. (2013) explored the use of crowdfunding in academia. In particular, they focused on crowdfunding as a means of supporting scientific research. The findings suggest that funding success is related to the scientists' ability to effectively communicate their research and that gains from such relationship with supporters surpass financial benefits, highlighting the need to encourage "scientific transparency and public involvement in the earliest stages of the research process and fostering lasting ties between scientists and non-scientists" (Wheat et al. 2013: 72).

Human rights activism and campaigning has been explored to great extent, both general reference and certain topics in particular, like for example women's rights (cf. Williams Crenshaw 2000; Chappell 2003; Friedman 2003). However, there has been no research of human rights activism within the context of crowdfunding. The online environment of such crowdfunding practices offer many new possibilities for human rights activities and, as such, makes for an interesting research topic.

2.2. The language of crowdfunding

Since the project creators cannot reach their potential supporters in person, the online crowdfunding allows them to use text and audio-visual aids to present their projects and gain the necessary support. The current study will focus on the textual dimension of crowdfunding projects. Some of the research in the field of crowdfunding has looked at the language employed in online platforms, but few have approached it from the discursive or wider linguistic perspective. For example, Marom & Sade (2013) have applied text data mining techniques to explore crowdfunding pitches in a large corpus of projects from Kickstarter platform. Their findings indicate that project creators choose to focus either on themselves as individuals or an organisation or on the project itself. This is seems to vary across different categories so, for instance, artistic projects seem to focus more often on the project creators' personality and abilities, whereas the technology themed ones place the emphasis on the idea and details of the project.

Furthermore, Gao & Lin (2015: 3) explored the project from peer-to-peer lending platform Prosper.com to find out if "crowdfunding investors consider texts provided by fundraisers, can text characteristics explain or predict the actual quality of crowdfunding projects, and if yes, can crowdfunding investors correctly interpret the informational value of these texts". Their research showed that the readers do pay a lot of attention to the project descriptions when considering lending, that features such as *readability, positivity*, *objectivity*; and *deception cues* determine the success of the project and, lastly, that the supporters can accurately interpret the elements, but only

to some extent, e.g. in some cases they fail to recognise the deception cues. Larrimore et al. found that funding success in microlending was positively associated with "the use of extended narratives, concrete descriptions and quantitative words that are likely related to one's financial situation", while "humanizing personal details or justifications for one's current financial situation were negatively associated with funding success" (2011: 19). Similarly, recent study of projects on microlending platform Kiva.org by Allison et al., drawing on Cognitive Evaluation and Self-Determination theory, reveals that "lenders respond positively to narratives highlighting the venture as an opportunity to help others, and less positively when the narrative is framed as a business opportunity" (2015: 53). Finally, Herzstein et al. (2011) analysed how the use of narratives influences decision-making in mircolending context. Their results indicate that project creators often present multiple identities, although this does not reflect favourably on the success of the project. However, lenders' trustworthiness in narration increases the chances of invested funds being returned.

3. Socio-semantic analysis of discursive legitimation

Legitimation is an important part of human communication. Individuals and groups always seek ways to legitimise their beliefs and actions. A lot of research has been done to explore how legitimacy is realised and understood by others. Approaches to legitimacy in social sciences, recently revisited by Beetham (2013), could be categorised as either *prescriptive*, through which social scientists determine the what is legitimacy and which behaviour and phenomena can be understood as legitimate, or *descriptive approach*, through which scholars in social sciences explore and aim to explain what makes particular actors or action legitimate in their own or the in the eyes of the society.

Legitimacy and legitimation have also received attention from scholars in the field of critical analysis of the discourse. Legitimation can be perceived as a means of achieving social validation and, in that, attaining social power. Therefore, the way of accessing different channels and tools of legitimation, as well the underlying ideological framework, might be explored from a discursive point of view. This case study draws on the socio-semantic model developed by Theo van Leeuwen (1995, 2006, 2008). Van Leuween sees discursive legitimation as realised either through *authority, morality, rationalisation or mythopesis*. Speaker or writer employ a variety of these strategies in order to legitimise particular or general social action. *Authorisation* is legitimation by referring to a particular source of authority. These sources vary greatly, from a single individual to the official authorities. Authority can be *personal*, in cases where it is related to people because of their status or social role, e.g. teachers' or parents' are often represented as having this type of authority. *Impersonal* authority, on the other hand, is related to laws, policies, regulations, etc. *Expert* authority comes from individual or group's professional expertise in a particular field. This can be noted, for example, in academic writing, where reporting verbal clauses are used to legitimise the introduced arguments. *Role model* authority is of particular importance in campaigns, endorsement and similar contexts, where person's social status is used to extend attitudes or behavioural patterns to the group of others who identify themselves with that social actor. The authority of *tradition* relies on the maxim "we have always done it (this way)", rejecting the opposing notions. Similarly, the authority of conformity, is built on the rule of majority and the ideas of normal and appropriate social practice.

When discussing *rationalisation* as a legitimation strategy, van Leewuen (2008) distinguishes between *instrumental* and *theoretical* rationalisation. The instrumental one strives to justify the existence of particular social practices and account for the way in which these are presently implemented. In such manner, social actions can be legitimised by referring to a particular social goal, being a means in itself or as having a desirable social effect. It is important to note that this form or rationalisation is tightly linked to moral legitimation, the goals, means and effect need to be

morally legitimised in relation to the valid social values. The theoretical legitimation can be employed independently of the moral one. With these strategies, social action is legitimised by *definition*, i.e. objectivisation, *explanation*, which generalises it, and *prediction*, which might be based on expertise. Finally, rationalisation can be *experiential*, which is in its nature pragmatic and applicable, and *scientific*, which can legitimised specialised institutional practices.

Legitimation by *morality* is based on social values. In case of *evaluation*, social actions are assessed in terms of their social desirability and their descriptions reflect the quality. With abstraction as legitimation strategy, discourses are linked "to practices (or to one or more of their component actions or reactions) in abstract ways that "moralize" them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values" (van Leeuwen 2008: 111). If *comparison* is applied, the legitimised practice is juxtaposed to an ideal one or, on the contrary, to a less desirable circumstances, relying again on the set of values established in the community.

Mythopoesis is construction of legitimation through narration, i.e. storytelling. *Moral tales*, as one of the mythopoetic strategies, present protagonists who are "rewarded for engaging in legitimate social practices or restoring the legitimate order" (van Leeuwen 2008: 117). Furthermore, these characters are often reported to have overcome many obstacles and challenges, but eventually triumphed. *Cautionary tales* do the opposite, they serve to warn about what might happen if social actors do not adhere to the desirable social practice. With *single determination* and *overdetermination*, the desirable practice is presented in specific semantic terms or symbolised/inverted, respectively, introducing what is appropriate and expected of the audience. Finally, it is important to emphasise that all of these strategies can be altered, combined or used simultaneously to effectively legitimise social action in different context.

Another approach to legitimation is presented by Rojo & van Dijk (1997) in their analysis of legitimation of the expulsion of Melilla migrants in Spanish parliamentary discourse. They found their analysis on the premise that legitimating is a means by which powerful social groups seek normative approval for their actions, also extended to the gropus themselves. Legitimating discourse can thus be approached on a *pragmatic level*, as it aims to legitimise a controversial action, on *semantic level*, legitimising a particular version of the narrative, and delegitimising others, and on *socio-political level*, where the employed strategies legitimise a whole discourse on macro level. Investigating a speech given by the Sapnish Secretary of Interior Mayor Oreja, Rojo and van Dijk examine in detail different levels and functions of discursive structures, like style, rhetorical structure, figures of speech, semantic roles, etc.). Finally, they suggest that legitimation obtained in this way becomes a source of power for the social group, as it extends to the global interactional sequence (Rojo & van Dijk 1997). Unlike van Leeuwen's (2008) grammar of legitimation, where the emphasis is on organising the reasons for (not) taking action, Rojo & van Dijk (1997) focus on the relationships between in-group/out-group representations and power distribution.

Discursive legitimation has also been discussed within the field of critical organisation studies (cf. Vaara et al. (2007) and Erkama & Vaara (2010)), which draw on Van Leeuwen's model (2006), but also, more recently, studies of political discourse investigating macro- and micro-legitimatory discursive strategies in media (KhosraviNik 2015), framed by discourse-historical approach to critical discourse analysis (Wodak 2001; Reisigl & Wodak 2009).

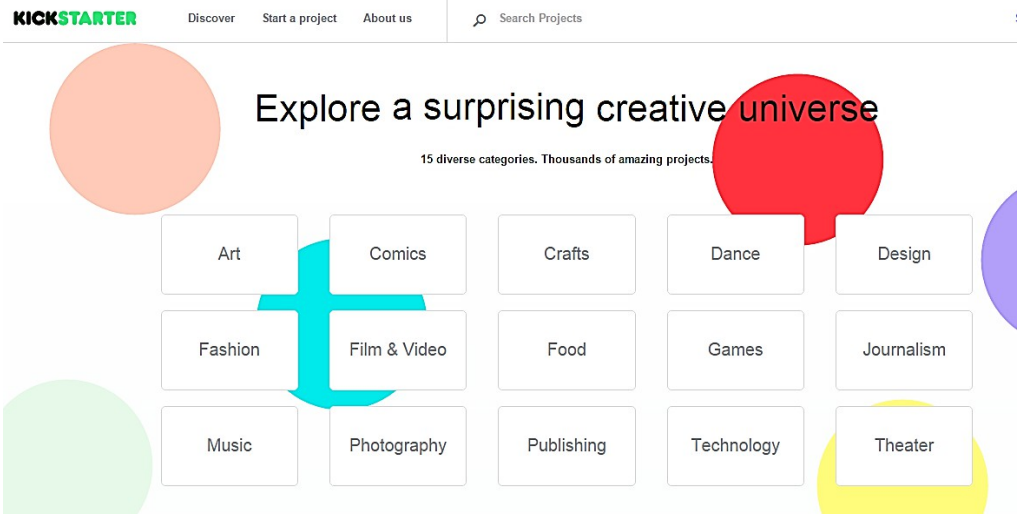
The current study relies on van Leeuwen's (2008) socio-semantic approach to legitimation and within the methods section it is explained in more detailed how it has been adapted and applied in this context. This choice is to a large extent motivated by the nature of phenomena explored, as calls for crowdfunding provide an indication of how a group should act and aim at mobilising individuals.

4. Research design

4.1. Kickstarter and corpus data

Kickstarter was chosen as the site of this case study, given that it is one of the most popular online crowdfunding platforms in the world (see e.g. Forbes 2013). It was launched in 2009 and has since then enabled successful funding of 94,581 projects, gathering 2,031,781,841 USD (figures on 25/10/2015), under the motto *Kickstarter – Bringing projects to life.* While fundraising for charity is forbidden, Kickstarter invites creative project proposals in variety of fields, from art, music and film to games, design and technology (see Figure 1); the only requirement is that the project has a clear, finite goal. Project *creators* are the individuals or groups who are asking for donations to meet the *funding goal* and parties who donate money or, in Kickstarter jargon *pledge*, often in exchange for *rewards*, are referred to as *backers*. The platform is open to the creators based in the USA and UK, while pledges are welcome from all over the world.

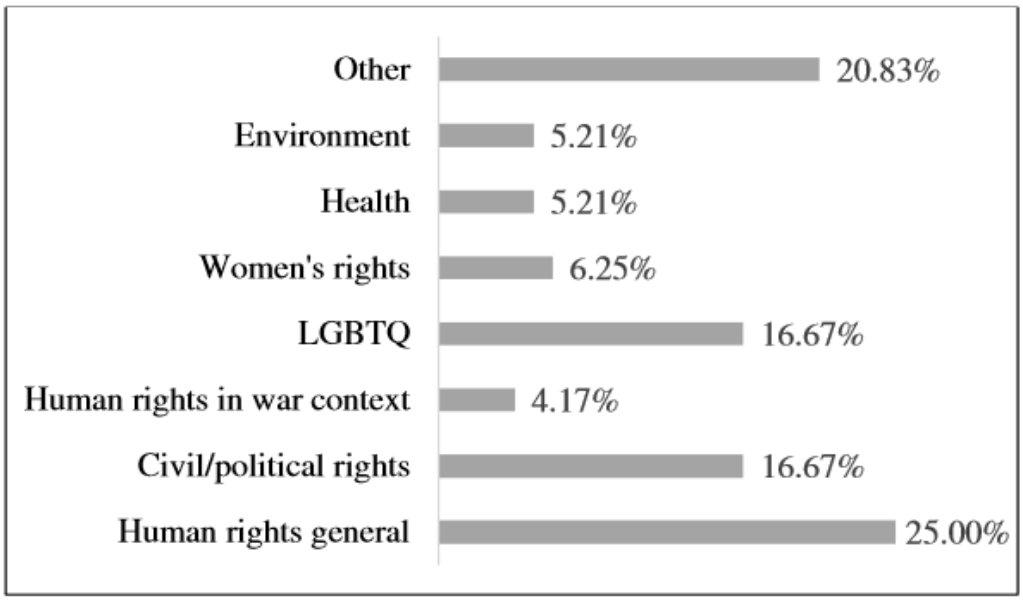
Figure 1: Kickstarter's Discover section



Fundraising is preceded by a preparatory phase in which the creators develop their project descriptions, add audio-visual contents, set-up social media channels and decide on the rewards they might wish to offer. Before going live, all the projects are reviewed by the Kickstarter team and creators can in particular ask for the staff feedback. Once they are ready for launch, the projects go live. The creators set a deadline by which they need to reach their funding goal; in case this is not the case, all the donations are returned to the backers. Not every crowdfunding platform has the *all-or-nothing policy*, but Kickstarter argues that it reduces the level of risk for both creators and backers, motivates and increases the efficiency of project delivery. Apart from impressive figures, the platform and the crowdfunding phenomenon in general got a lot of attention due to some of the projects it hosted. One of these is the *Veronica Mars Movie*, in which the fans of the cancelled series Veronica Mars have pledged over $5.7 million to see the film version made, later followed by *Wish I Was Here*. The projects spurred debate on the role and power of the audience, as well on the policies of the large television and production houses. Furthermore, the Kickstarter community argued about the impact of such block-buster projects on the smaller initiatives run by relatively anonymous creators.

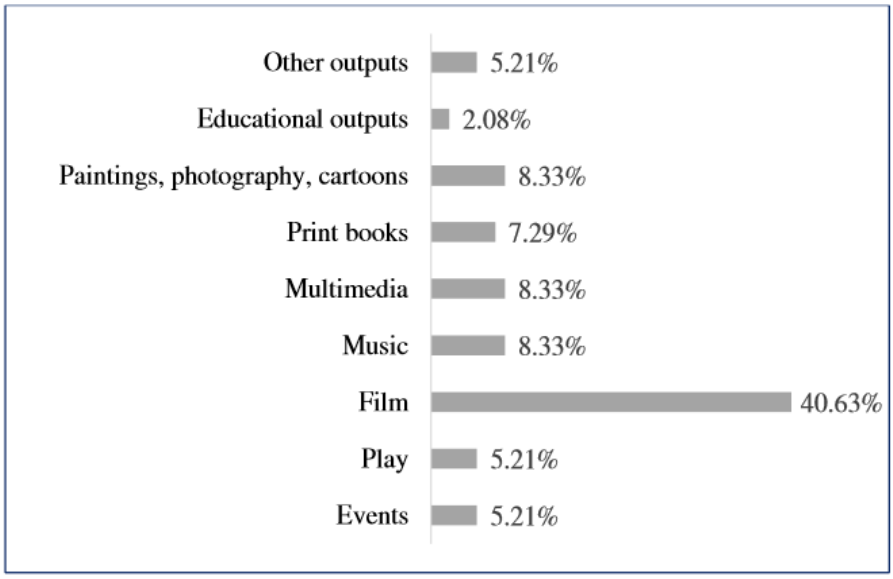
For the purpose of this this study a specialised corpus was compiled to include projects related to the topic of human rights awareness and protection. Since Kickstarter categorises the projects based on the genre or, to some extent, medium of their delivery, rather than the topics, these were found by searching the available database for projects using the query "human rights". A total of 96 projects were identified, launched in the period from 2013 to 2015.

Figure 2: Distribution of human rights-related topics in Kickstarter project



The projects were the categorised based on the topic, i.e. particular aspect of human rights field they were focused on, as well as the according to the format of the projects' final output. With regards to the topics, the following themes emerged: general human rights awareness, civil/political rights, human rights in the context of war or violent conflict, LGBTQ rights, feminism/women's rights, human rights related to health and environment and other projects, which were mostly focused more individual aims. In cases where projects were eligible for two or more categories, only the one estimated as dominating was assigned. The distribution of topics is presented in Figure 2. As shown, the majority of projects were classified as dealing with human rights in general, without a more narrow focus, and the second most numerous category includes projects focused on other topics or individual ventures. The fewest projects dealt with human rights protection in war and conflict affected environment.

Figure 3: A variety of outputs in human rights-related projects



The projects selected to be included in the project offered a wide range of various expected outputs, from educational programmes, to paintings, books, films or web applications. However, films, mostly documentary, were most frequently in the focus of human rights related projects, as presented in Figure 3.

Once the suitable projects were identified in the Kickstarter platform, the focus shifted on the "Campaign" section (Figure 4) text of the projects. This is the part of the project proposal where the creators describe their project in detail, introduce their motives and explained the desired outcomes, highlighting the potential benefits but also reflecting on risks and challenges they might encounter implementing the project in case it gets funded. This section was deemed the as the most appropriation to explore the legitimation strategies creator use because, as Marom & Sade (2013) note, project descriptions do matter and influence the way potential supporters feel and act on a project.

Figure 4: An example of a project heading

The text of "Campaign" sections for these 96 projects was then was copied into software-accessible format, comprising eventually a specialised corpus of 58,979 words. The corpus was then uploaded to UAM Corpus Tool. Although campaign creators used images and video material to accompany their texts, within the scope of this paper I will focus on the textual mode of the selected campaigns.

4.2. Tools and methods

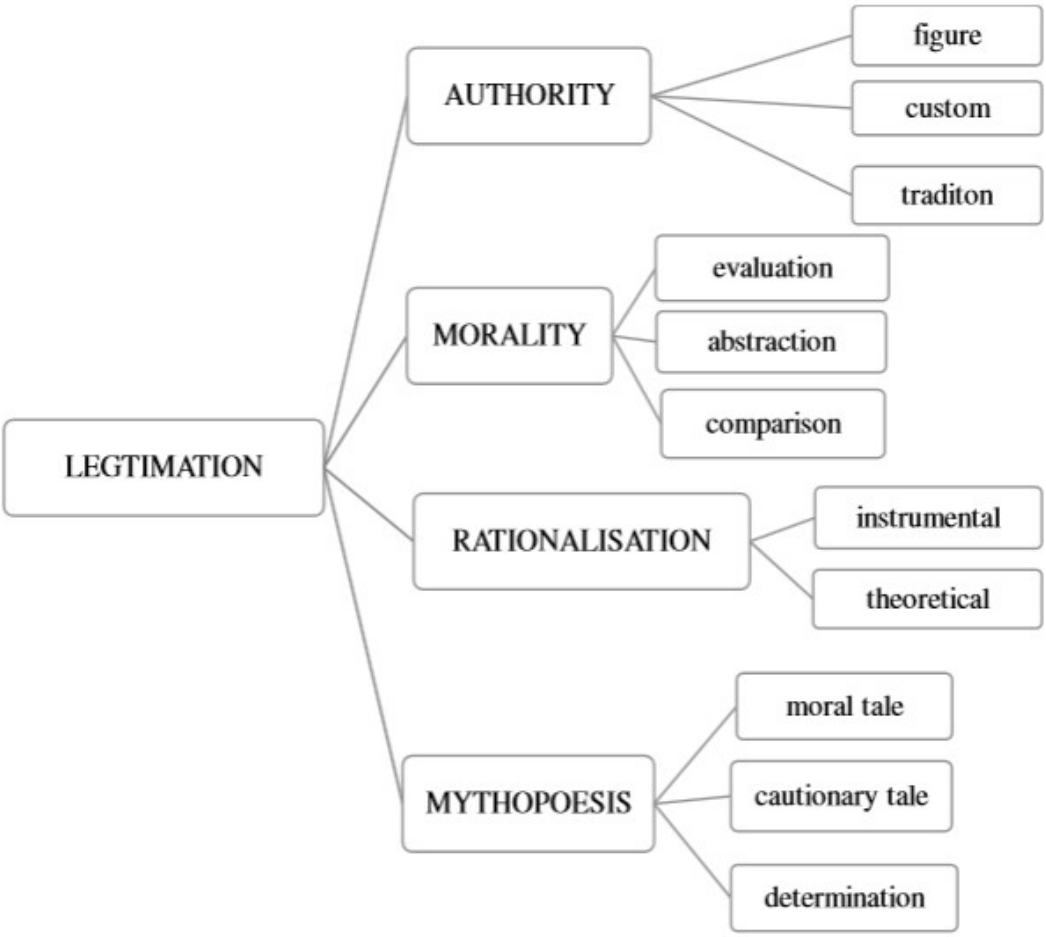
UAM Corpus Tool 3.1.4.,[1] the software package developed by Michael O'Donnell (2008) was selected for the annotation of the Kickstarter corpus. It an open source tool which enables multi-layered annotation, both manual and automatic, on document and segment level. It was found particularly suitable for this study as it allows the users to create their own annotation scheme.

Van Leeuwen's (2008) model was employed to develop the annotation scheme for the corpus. The initial scheme was modified after I have done some pilot annotation, to make a better account of the legitimation strategies occurring. The whole corpus was then manually coded using the scheme shown in Figure 5. The annotations were added on text segment level, the length of segment varying, sometimes from a two words phrase to a whole paragraph. The cases where it was

1 The software is freely available for download at http://www.wagsoft.com/CorpusTool/

uncertain how to annotate a particular strategy were re-visited at the end of the analysis. Double annotations were avoided, although there were cases of strategies overlapping. The findings are presented in the following sections, first quantitatively, and then qualitatively.

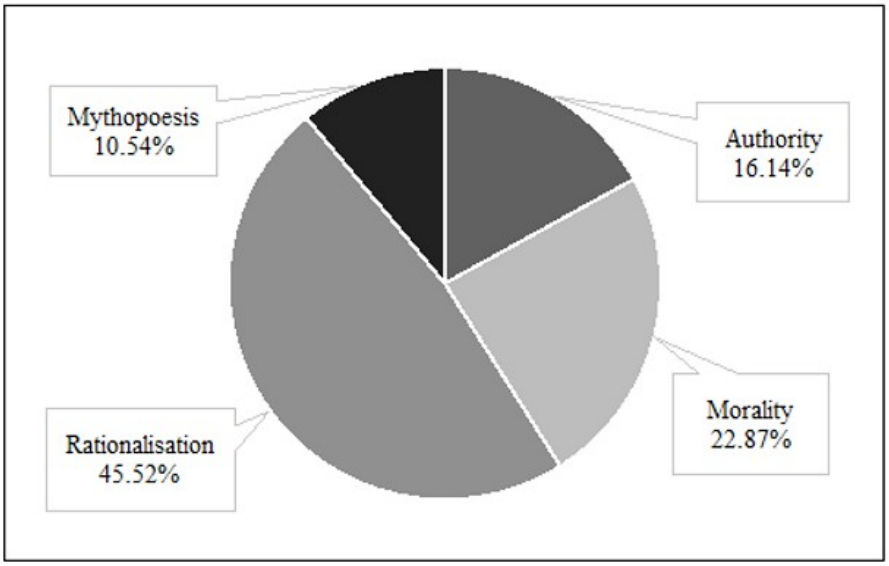
Figure 5: Legitimation strategies annotation scheme (adapted from Leeuwen 2008)



5. Findings

Once the annotation process was completed, the UAM Corpus Tool was used to gain insight into basic descriptive statistics features. First of all, I was interested in learning which legitimation strategies merged most frequently in the Kickstarter corpus. Looking at the first level only (Figure 6), it can be noted that legitimation by strategies relying on rationalisation was employed most often, followed by morality and authority based strategies, while mythopoesis was the least frequent vehicle for legitimation. Next, I focus on each of these categories separately.

Figure 6: Distribution of different legitimation strategies across the Kickstarter corpus



5.1. Rationalisation

Within the legitimation strategies found in the corpus, 45.52% of these are in the category of rationalisation, 35.43% belonging to instrumental and 10.09% to theoretical rationalisation. Creators employ instrumental rationalisation strategies when describing their project both to legitimise the act of them crowdfunding the resources and the donors pledging their funds to support the respective project. In terms of describing the project, its effect is often highlighted on community, as well as on the individual level. In these example, it is expected that by reading this book the young audience will be adequately educated about social reality, and that the water map would facilitate urbanistic planning in the area:

> The first part of the book explains what the society in which children of the present live is about. It also discusses the values the families cherish which are often opposed to that reality. **Thus the children are faced with a realistic picture, through valid arguments the worldview of their parents is strengthened**. (*Humanism for Children*)

> This vision map would **directly serve the communities** that are connected to the South Platte River and would **support the communication** about projects that emerge from "the Downstream Neighbor". (*Vision map for water future South Platte River*)

It could also initially create a negative effect, but lead eventually to a positive change:

> The images in the film, though disturbing to many, are designed to do just that--**alert people to the pandemic state of LGBT hate crimes and unnerve them to the point of action**. (*Who Are You?*)

Furthermore, many creators rationalise the crowdfunding by explaining their financial needs and how the pledges will cover for these:

> Funding from the Kickstarter campaign will go **towards completing the rough-cut version of the film and allow for us to most urgently screen the film** at an important meeting of decision makers and mining sector CEOs in Africa on TB and Mining later

> this year. (*They Go to Die*)

With theoretical legitimation, strategies very often include sharing experience, explaining the context or using scientific data to urge the potential pledgers to support the project. To illustrate, some creators choose to enclose statistical evidence to illustrate the extent of the problem they are aiming to address:

> Over **10 billion animals raised for food in the U.S. annually endure inhumane treatment**. Crowding and stress from these conditions compromise animals' immune systems. **They must ingest antibiotics regularly to prevent disease**. (*Smell the Bread*)

Finally, there are 203 annotations of legitimation strategies employing rationalisation, which averages over 2 occurrences per project.

5.2. Morality

In the second most frequent category the project creators legitimise social action by appealing to morality. In the projects comprising the Kickstarter corpus, the majority of creators have done his through abstraction. This means that they have effectively linked individual, very specific action or behaviour to a more global social action or phenomenon. For example, in *Don't Ask Me Why* project, donating money is not only a means of financially supporting the making of a single film, but, moreover, transcends into a much higher and worthy aim:

> We are asking you to **take a stand for equality and for the power of storytelling** through music and video, and we are forever grateful for your support. (*Don't Ask me Why*);

It is even magical:

> We believe that **magic happens when people come together in passion and purpose for creative collaboration**, and we hope for the opportunity to do that with you. (*Don't Ask me Why*).

Although less often, evaluation also appear as a legitimation strategy in the corpus, most when creators ascribe very positive features to their current and/or proposed work:

> This book will be an enchanting, entertaining, treasure that children will want their mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and others to read to them over and over again. (*The Lost Bear & Free Bees: A Human Rights Parable*)

Positive evaluation also regularly appears through the strategies the project creators use to write about themselves as individuals or as a group, but also when they are referring to the potential pledgers. Lastly, comparison strategies have also been applied to legitimise crowdfunding, although not that often. Comparison is often made between one's own project and the other projects addressing the same human rights issue or producing an output of the same or similar format. As described in the following paragraph, it is important to make the project distinguishable among so many others:

> We have stories that need to be told but **what makes this project different?** We are

> stepping out of what is seen as the stereotype and showing you members of the LGBT community who contributes to society, who raise their families, and that work beside you to create a better life for themselves and those around them. (*Lovin Me: A Human Rights Story*)

5.3. Authority

Authorisation is the third most frequent discursive strategy, employed in 16.14% cases of legitimation in the Kickstarter corpus. It is often related to a specific figure of authority (9.42%) and realised as recommendation (6.50%). Some of the creators choose to place the focus on an important figure which inspires their project, therefore justifying its necessity, to illustrate:

> Roberto Clemente **is a hero to the world**, particularly Latin Americans and the people of his native Puerto Rico, as he was **the greatest Latino player in the major leagues**, the Jackie Robinson of the Spanish-speaking world. (*Baseball's Last Hero: The Roberto Clemente Story*)

In other cases, the authority figure referred to is a known expert in the field who is somehow involved with or supporting the project:

> The Summer School is led by **Nick Danziger, an internationally renowned practitioner in the field of human rights documentary making**. (*Her dream: to be the human rights filmmaker of Afghanistan*)

These figures can also offer recommendations or be presented as role-models for the type of social action which was being promoted. The source of authority might be an impersonal figure too, like an official institution or a prominent organisation in the relevant field:

> Border of Lights is an **international arts/human rights collective, formed in 2012 and championed by students, educators, activists and humanitarians**. The collective utilizes art and education as a social justice tool within the US, Dominican Republic and Haiti, to commemorate, collaborate, and continue the legacy of hope and justice (*Border of Lights 2015*).

Legitimation by authority was also recognised in reference to awards or titles received by project creators or supporters.

5.4. Mythopesis

Finally, mythopoesis was also employed in the Kickstarter corpus in order to achieve legitimation, although less frequently than other discursive strategies. Moral tales (6.50%) and cautionary tales (3.59%) emerged more often than determination narratives (0.22%). The use of moral tales varies, in some cases they are an integral part of the project itself and often become its final output, for example, in a form of a book or a documentary. The narrative is then in the focus of the project description:

> His motto was that if you had a chance to help others and fail to do so, you are wasting your time on this earth. To Clemente, wealth and fame were created to be resources of compassion to those less fortunate. His moral global responsibility extended beyond the playing field. (*Baseball's Last Hero: The Roberto Clemente Story)*

Elsewhere, project creators use moral tales to frame their own work and give account of what they have achieved so far:

> **I have spent endless, sleepless nights working on these paintings.** From sketching the preliminary idea to painting the first layer to realizing "it needs something more" or "it could be better" to re-doing a painting and making another version and another and another. **I'm proud to say that the paintings below are in their purest, final form.** And, while it did not come easy, they were worth it. (*EQUALITY | Feminism, LGBT, & Racial Equality Paintings*)

Cautionary tales are also present in the Kickstarter corpus:

> **Imagine you are experiencing the worst pain of your life.** Now imagine that the only way to get the pain medication you need is to travel several hours on a rickety public bus, while you are in agony. That's the reality for thousands of people every year in Mexico. (*A video on pain relief in Mexico*)

However, just like with some of the moral tales, these are often left open ended, indicating that the pledgers have an opportunity to change the course of events in the narrative, where in this strategy is linked with legitimation by rationalisation.

6. Discussion

Before analysing these findings within the theoretical framework and in the context of the previous studies, it is necessary to point out some of the limitations of this paper. Firstly, this is a small-scale case study, the corpus including only projects from a single crowdfunding platform. However, it can be argued that it is representative of a particular genre within the crowdfunding sphere and discourse in general. Finally, the annotation process is inevitably subject to researcher bias, with possibility of mistakes. Nonetheless, the findings open a space for discussion of legitimation strategies used in online crowdfunding.

First of all, it is interesting to explore in more detail the use of the "tag" and the expression human rights. Although all the projects undergo a review and are subject to approval from the Kickstarter team, choosing to add this tag and classify the project as related to human rights is a decision made by creators themselves. The thematic distribution of projects on Kickstarter reveals that majority of project are concerned with human rights in general, without focusing on a particular aspect of it. These aim to raise awareness of the importance of human rights and encourage their protection, sometimes all over the world sometimes on a very local level. Another prominent category is comprised of projects labelled as "Other". It was either not possible to link these projects to any existing theme or they were set with an individual or even creators' personal agenda. This raises the issue of conceptualising human rights, as these might be the cases where the creators do not fully understand what human rights entail or, more likely, choose to use the "human rights" in order to represent the project as linked a to particular wider agenda or even to generate more interest and attract potential pledgers. As Allison et al. (2015) have suggested, presenting the project as a chance for the pledgers to help others yield better funding outcomes. These projects are nonetheless saved in Kickstarter's archive. Projects related to civil rights in the context of political or wider social issues are also frequent, many topics within this category linked to political persecution, cases of structural and institutional violence, issues related to migration, citizenship and so on. Interestingly, majority of these projects and initiatives are dealing with human rights issues outside of the USA and UK, but are set up and implemented by creators in these countries (as

required by Kickstarter's terms and conditions of use). Another prevailing theme are the rights of LGBTQ community. Projects mostly warn about recurring cases of discrimination and are intended raise the awareness of the importance of educating and informing the general public. In terms of location, project aim to create change in both in the USA and the UK, as well as in some other countries, with varied legislative and sociopolitical frameworks. Gender matters and women's rights, environment, health issues and human rights in areas affected by war and conflicts have also emerged repeatedly in the Kickstarter corpus.

If considered in the terms of general CDA framework, it can be noted that the projects tend to deal with wider social phenomena or individual cases where human rights of a particular group have been endangered or somehow challenged by different factors, sometimes circumstantial, sometimes resulting from another group exercising their power. The Kickstarter projects can therefore be seen as a means of intervention by the creators. Firstly, they have recognised as social problem, in many cases, a consequence in stark power disparity between social groups in particular socio-political context. Next, the campaign creators proposed their projects as a solution or a means of alleviating or even preventing it such power disparity. Crowdfunding is the step in which they are asking for wider approval and, eventually, financial support, justifying the need for the platform to support the online community development and motivational crowdwork (Gerber & Hui 2013). Therefore, crowdfunding platforms might be seen as channel of constructing what Höijer (2004) calls the discourse of global compassion. This process includes informing the public about human rights (or other) crisis, and suggesting ways in which the supporters might more or less directly help the situation.

There is a wide variety of project output formats in the corpus but it need to be noted that this is to great extent stipulated by the project categories hosted by Kickstarter. As a measurable or concrete output of their project, vast majority of creators (over 40%) have chosen to produce a film. Their rationale is that film is an effective way of communicating the message across and engaging with a wider audience. This might leave with the impression that film industry, documentary film in particular, benefits hugely from crowdfunding but, as Sorenson (2015: 2789) notes, film production and distribution is "still dominated and controlled by established media institutions" and in order for crowdfunding to become a stable complementary financing model, "new sustainable peer-to-peer distribution routes and exhibition networks that are not predicated and dependent on legacy media outlets need to emerge". Apart from documentary and fiction film, other the Kickstarter corpus host projects resulting in artistic forms such as paintings, photography, music and multimedia, as well as plays and organisation of different events. This illustrates the diversity of channels recognised as suitable for conveying the message about human rights.

When it comes the annotation of corpus for legitimation strategies, the first thing to note is that the elaborated model presented by van Leeuwen (2008) was applicable on the higher levels of hierarchy; however, further branching did not emerge and the two-level scheme was found more appropriate and sufficient to encompass the legitimation strategies in the corpus. The fact that a single legitimation strategy was rarely used on its own and that there were cases of overlapping, suggests that project creators are likely to opt for a combination of two or more legitimation strategies, to ensure that they have highlighted all the aspects of the project that might be relevant to the potential supporters. It should be noted that there is two-fold link between the legitimation strategies employed and the contents of Kickstarter corpus. On the one hand, strategies, in particular legitimation by rationalisation or authority are employed to legitimise pledging for particular campaigns, but in other cases legitimation refers to the processes of crowdfunding and fundraising in general, and to the action of supporting a particular cause;

Legitimation by rationalisation emerges as most frequent discursive strategy and, just like with microlending (Larrimore at al. 2011), providing detailed explanations of the project's aim and quantifying the financial needs is a viable means of increasing the project's transparency (Gerber &

Hui 2013). The project creators seem to recognise the supporters' desire to known how their donation will be used exactly and point out the measurable impact they supporters might create if the pledge. Although justification of one's current financial circumstances and rationalising the need to raise money in this way is negatively related to funding success, many project creators tend to include this in their project descriptions. These segments include an accounts of all the other options too, rationalising why crowdfunding in the most appropriate on. Appealing to morality in order to justify crowdfunding and encourage donations is fairly expected in the context of human rights related causes, given that empathy and being ascribed the identity of an altruistic person can motivate giving (Aaker & Akutsu 2009). This is also in line with studies that outlined receiving social validation as one of the motivating factors for individuals participating in online crowdfunding (Gerber et al. 2012; Gerber & Hui 2013).

However, the discursive strategy of abstraction is novel in this context. When this is applied, a very concrete action within the proposed project or the act of pledging itself, are being first linked to and then equated to very general and often vague social processes. This leads to the project descriptions being evidently exaggerated, unrealistic or even melodramatic, but nonetheless is among the most frequent forms of legitimation in the Kickstarter corpus. When evaluation is used, these strategies we focused on the project creators themselves, which is the case with artistically inclined project descriptions (Marom & Sade 2013). These strategies often intertwine with legitimation by authority, as sometimes, the project creators are presented as an authority and eminent figures within the respective field, either due to their qualifications or the previous work and experience. It is interesting to note that authority legitimation in the corpus does not rely on customs and traditions. If considered in the context of human rights activism, this might be due to the facts that majority of the projects challenge the current state of affairs and aim to bring about bring about social change, rather than validating and reproducing the present circumstances. This supports the argument that legitimation is employed not only in relation to specific campaigns and causes, but also to justify the idea of crowdfunding.

Narration legitimation strategies in the Kickstarter corpus often revolve, not only around the individuals or groups who are affected by the human rights issue being addressed, but the project creators themselves. They become the protagonists of the story and link their abilities with the project aims. As Herzenstein et al. (2011: 26) note, narratives do not only offer rich qualitative data about the project creators, but also provide the opportunity to "expand current decision making models of lending (and other economic transactions), reduce uncertainty transaction partners usually face and limit future challenges similar to those recently experienced in the financial markets". Finally, narratives in the Kickstarter project also serve to present the possible development of events and improved future situation regarding the human rights awareness and protection. These go to illustrate the effect that might be achieve by potential supporters taking part in the project.

7. Conclusion

The current study applied the model of discursive legitimation of social action to explore how the crowdfunding for human rights has been legitimised on the Kickstarter platform. The findings presented indicate that it is possible to operationalise the model in the context of specialised corpus, such as has been compiled from the project descriptions published on Kickstarter. The projects in question have encompassed a variety of specific topics within the field of human rights, as well as a myriad of different formats, in particular documentary and fiction films. Human rights are here framed within wider discourse humanitarianism, where individuals are offered social validation and altruistic identity, in return for their support of the project. Although projects vary in scope and approach, they all focus on interventions leading to positive social change. Within a CDA framework, this can be regarded as redistribution of power between social groups in a way that

lessens the current disparity.

Through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the annotated discursive strategies, I have discovered that rationalisation and appealing to morality appear most frequently in the descriptions of projects promoting human rights awareness and protection. Such specific two-fold use of legitimation strategies in reference to particular campaign causes as well as the wider phenomenon of crowdfunding might be seen as indicative of a new genre. Furthermore, when regarded in reference to Martin's definition of genre as "the system of staged, goal-oriented social processes through which social subjects in a given culture live their lives" (2015: 46, 1992), online crowdfunding does feature such goal-oriented social processes, staged in a very specific medium. Finally, the implications of crowdfunding arise not only from the effect of project and initiatives it enables, but also through its influence on the accessibility enterprise development resources in general.

Exploring the legitimation of social actions from a discursive point of view does not only have the potential of informing the practice of crowdfunding, but also provides an insight into how the social action, in this particular case human rights activism, is discursively constructed and exercised by both project leaders and supporters. It would be fruitful to pursue further, more extensive research into the multimodal aspects of crowdfunding discourse, as the scope of this paper is limited to the textual and discursive dimension. Moreover, a research into the interactive elements available on online crowdfunding platforms would provide a deeper insight into the crowdfunding discourse from the perspective of project supporters, but also the dynamics of their interaction with project creators.

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Investigating impoliteness in workplace emails by Chinese users of English

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Abstract: This paper presents a number of findings concerning impoliteness within the workplace email of Chinese users of English. Particular interest was given to the exploration of the relationship between specific speech acts and the occurrence of impoliteness and non-politeness; what impolite devices were used in frontline business communication; what are the circumstances, patterns and functions of impoliteness in workplace email? Findings illustrate that message enforcers were the most common impoliteness device used, generally being utilized to make a demand, emphasize a position and place blame. In terms of giving rise to potential impoliteness the assertive speech act was the most hazardous. In order to maintain authenticity the examples used are reproduced exactly as they occurred in the data set, in places substantial deviations from the conventions of English grammar and spelling are to be found. Pedagogical implications are discussed in the conclusion.

Keywords: Workplace email, email acts, impoliteness devices, non-politeness, face.

1. Introduction

Email is ubiquitous within the modern workplace; product introductions, order confirmations, shipping receipts, account alerts, short reports, long reports, announcements and corporate bulletins are just a few of the genres subsumed by the medium. One cannot underestimate the revolutionary impact the medium has had upon business operations and employees alike (Hewitt 2006). In an era where the 'competition is just a click way', employees of all rank and order are charged with the task of maintaining frequent communication with business partners, often originating from significantly different cultural and linguistic backgrounds whilst having to use English as a business lingua franca. In the fast paced, highly connected global economy, emailers are expected to execute a multitude of tasks far beyond the simple transmission of information. This has to be done through a medium that does not allow for the conveyance of emotional cues, nor interjection on behalf of a locutor, and at best is highly ambiguous – existing between both written and spoken language in terms of style (Baron 2000). It has been noted that ESL/EFL business professionals can be unintentionally impolite during high-stakes moments, especially during arguments or when presenting negative information; this is most probably a function of ignorance, i.e. they are innocent of the linguistic implications of impoliteness in written communication (Bousfield 2008; Culpeper 2011). For non-native speakers of English, the risks of being misinterpreted or construed as being impolite have profound implications for working relationships and Brand perceptions. For this reason this paper aims to investigate the research gap of C2C (company-to-company) email (im)politeness amongst non-native speakers of English; in this case Chinese users of English.

As a topic of investigation, email has found its way onto the scholarly agendas of several streams of knowledge - many not principally concerned with language matters (e.g. management studies, media studies and social psychology). Studies from such fields have focused on many of the problematic effects of email, such as excessive volume (Dawley & Anthony 2003), information overload (O'Kane et al. 2007), work interruption (Jackson et al. 2003) and avoidant decisional styles (Phillips & Reddie 2007). Again, whilst these studies are not primarily concerned with language matters, they have been useful in aiding further understanding of the contextual factors that contribute to workplace (im)politeness. From a purely linguistic perspective, an arguably more relevant body of literature has been built up in relation to the use of the medium in the commercial sphere including analysis of textual features (Gains 1999), register (Gimenez 2006), intercultural communication (Murphy & Levy 2006), pragmatics (Ho 2011), discourse analysis (Kong 2006),

readability (Sallis & Kassabova 2000) and style (Author 2000; Waldvogel 2007). On the whole both politeness and impoliteness in regards to email remain an under-researched avenue of investigation.

The study of email is important to ESP (English for Specific Purposes) in that the dominant role of English as a lingua franca in global business is realized mainly by email. Multiple studies have confirmed the integral part of English in communication within multinational and even national companies, for instance, Hewitt (2006), Gimenez (2006) and Evans (2010, 2012). Ehrenreich (2010) describes English in business as an "international contact language" realizing the dialogue between non-native and native interactants from varied lingualcultural backgrounds with all levels of language capabilities. Therefore, the English-proficiency of employees is considerably vital to ensure a successful communication with their business partners. Although English-mediated email has played a crucial role in the workplace, "the ESP literature itself is not especially overflowing with studies of email communication in business settings" (Evans 2012: 203). Email etiquette has been discussed even less. As a result, training materials for Business English scarcely cover email impoliteness, leaving an obvious gap between classroom and workplace.

1.1. Linguistic impoliteness in the workplace

In order to build harmonious relations and maintain face, business communication is often idealized by a high degree of politeness and an active avoidance of impoliteness (Holmes, 2005), nevertheless in certain types of business communicative acts such as making requests, giving commands and checking comprehension, impoliteness may be given the opportunity to occur quite easily (Chakorn 2006; Murphy & Levy 2006). Some claim that impoliteness being directly linked with the notion of the face threatening act (FTA) is actually commonly found in the workplace (Schnurret al. 2008). A few studies have looked at verbal interactions amongst co-workers, Schnurr et al. (2008) examined verbal interactions among employees and stressed the role of power in relation to impoliteness; the majority of offensive acts observed were inflicted by superiors on subordinates. However, research in this area is even more limited than in the area of politeness due to the fact that authentic verbal or written evidence of impoliteness within an institutional context is scarce. Culpeper's research (1996, 2008, 2011) on impoliteness is widely quoted, but his interest is more on private or in-group contexts applying mostly to family and friendship circles. Politeness in different written contexts in business is generally overlooked.

1.2 Impoliteness in email

Some researchers portray email as a "depersonalized and businesslike" medium capable only of information transmission rather than interpersonal relationship formation and maintenance; politeness markers or indicators being reduced or omitted (Liu 2002). Others however assert that politeness strategies within the medium are highly important and function so as to build social solidarity amongst emailers (Kong 2006; Murphy & Levy 2006). Indeed email function has been shown to affect the use of politeness strategies; Murphy & Levy (2006) found that politeness strategies used varied between low- and high-imposing requests. Kankaanranta (2006) claims the choice of politeness strategy is influenced by factors such as social distance, power, rankings of individuals in specific cultures as well as other cross-cultural norms and values. Further aggravating factors include the speed of communication and the high degree of informality as in spoken discourse; "discourtesy flows from the need for haste and brevity" (Evans 2012: 208).

As already well enunciated in this paper, (im)politeness is directly linked with face threatening acts (FTA) however it should be noted that at the time of research, face threatening acts in written workplace communication, are under-researched. Several studies have exposed verbal threats in internal emails from senior staff to junior members of staff (Limberg 2009; Angouri & Tseliga 2010); perhaps suggesting that impoliteness is more commonplace than common perception has it.

It has been noted that apart from textual context and style, emails in the workplace also seem to be affected by non-linguistic behavior, for example, information overload (O'Kane et al. 2007) and work interruption (Jackson et al. 2003). Other email acts such as postponement, use of punctuation marks, intentional exclusion, use of capitalization, cc-ing copy to other parties, no subject line, no salutation and closing could also have impolite effects (Li & MacGregor 2010). These are however beyond the scope of this paper.

Care has to be taken when extrapolating findings from many of the studies on (im)politeness as many were conducted amongst academic staff and students; power relations amongst corporate employees differ remarkably from those found in the average faculty. Furthermore whilst very few studies have applied the theory of politeness to the study of inter-corporate emails, even fewer have solely concentrated on impoliteness. Little is known about how politeness strategies and impolite devices are used in dealing with high-stake activities, such as making strong requests and conveying negative messages, in facilitating business transactions and in building business relations.

1.3. English as a business lingua franca

The fact that English has become the language of international business communication (Crystal 2006) is confirmed by multiple studies (Seidlhofer et al 2006; Flowerdew & Wan 2006; Kong 2006; Evans 2010, 2012). As much of business now operates in a global market, many business communications take place in neither party's first language, and English is often the language of choice. Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2006) claim business English is the most common type of language used in the commercial sphere, not only by people from different nations but also amongst people within the same nation. Moreover, non-native English-speaking professionals now greatly outnumber native speakers (Crystal 2003). For international companies, the language competency of their non-native-speaking employees is of considerable importance to ensure successful communication with their business partners.

Business communication between non-native speakers of English is relevant to applied linguists interested in how language works in real-world contexts, rather than in the classroom. Of the studies related to workplace writing, some attempt to investigate authentic records of business communication (Flowerdew & Wan 2006; Kirkpatrick 1991; Kong 2006). Kong's business discourse study analyzed 250 internal directive emails according to their semantic accounts: reason, condition, purpose, result, attribution, concession and manner, and illustrated indirectness in business interactions. In three types of relationship: peer to peer, subordinate to superior and superior to subordinate, the politeness behaviours are found to be related to the Chinese ideology of hierarchy which stipulates absolute respect for power and authority. The differences among the groups are attributable to politeness and mitigation of potential face-threat (Kong 2006: 96-98). Chakorn (2006) focused on the use of hedging in business letters for building "harmony" in commercial activities amongst corporations in Asia. Diverse politeness strategies have also been observed in Northern Europe, where Finish and Swedish workers used frank and direct tones when making requests by email (Kankaanranta 2006). Although these studies give some indication of the importance and frequency of English use, the findings offer few clues as to the audience, purpose, length, status and – most importantly – the complexities of (im)politeness, professionals are required to deal in written communication.

The issue of confidentiality makes it difficult to source authentic business communication texts (Flowerdew & Wan 2006; Li 2001). This reason, in part, explains the predominant focus of business writing research on writing produced specifically for public purposes, for example CEOs' letters or Chairmen's statements (Hyland 1998), financial reports (Bhatia 2010), promotional materials (Cheng & Mok 2006; Connor & Gladkov 2004). Email research tends to rely on internal communication (Li 2000; Limberg 2009), or personal contact (Gains 1999; Crystal, 2006; Locher 2011), or between teachers and students (Ho 2011; Kogetsidis 2011). These studies described

different communicative features and functions of workplace emails and personal emails, mostly on building up relationship and managing rapport, but they only partially depicted workplace writing needs; they particularly lack linguistic evidence of how negative situations are dealt with in inter-company business transactions.

The research questions of this study are:

1. What are the impoliteness devices used in frontline business email exchange by Chinese users of English?
2. What are the circumstances and patterns of impoliteness in workplace emails?
3. What are the functions of impoliteness in the workplace emails?
4. What is the cultural impact on the perceptions of impoliteness in the Chinese workplace?

2. Research methods

2.1. Data

Authentic, naturally occurring emails proved invaluable for the investigation of impoliteness within the exchanges of Chinese users of English in workplace email. Indeed few studies to date have examined such Company to Company (C2C) email exchanges. The data used in this study are 373 emails, spanning a time period of 2008-2012, contributed by a company operating in the textile production industry in Hong Kong with offices in the mainland China. The main email protagonists were quality controllers and sales persons responsible for the overall day-to-day production process, from the initial cutting to the final shipment of the finished products. 90% of them had university degrees in different disciplines. All emails involve external communication between individuals from different companies and factories. To ensure confidentiality, sensitive data in the emails, such as names and addresses of business partners, were replaced by pseudonyms. Confidential information about products and prices were also removed for final presentation. An email study can be done better with a corpus approach because frequencies of patterns could reveal the norms of a particular genre and thus reflect the community of practice (Wenger 1998).

2.2. Analytical framework

The study of email, because of its unique nature as a medium, suggests itself to a wide range of analytic approaches available to linguists and other social scientists. The analysis first follows the classification of email speech acts by Goldstein and Sabin (2006) to identify communicative functions of each email message, and then takes on Culpeper's model of investigating conventional and implicational impoliteness in different contexts. The last stage of the analysis is to match email acts with impolite devices.

Goldstein and Sabin (2006), heavily borrowing from the well established Speech Acts theory (Austin 1962; Bach & Harnish 1979; Seale 1986), developed the concept of 'email speech acts'. Excluding those that involve acts towards the self or the non-personal emails such as reminders such as company newsletters, reminders and announcements, Speech Email Acts or SEA, identified by Goldstein and Sabin can be divided into five main categories: Assertives; Behabitives; Commits; Directives and Transmissives. Goldstein and Sabin's categories were utilised when annotating the emails in the corpus as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Email Act annotation guidelines

Email Act		**Data example**
Assertive	Make statements/state opinions/express belief. Suggesting, boasting, concluding.	*1,375M WILL COST A LOT ON PRODUCTION, SHIPPING, DOCS...ETC.* *THE BEST PRICE I CAN 2.45/M.*
Behabitive	Expression of feelings/mental attitude towards a certain set of events. Apologizing, welcoming, thanking.	*Sorry I forget to advise you fabric mill need to e-mail us the PI for record, when receive you need to check all the details.*
Commit	Promise action/offer to do something. Vowing, agreeing, planning.	*I will send you the prices of S091 by tomorrow …*
Directive	Request for action/command. Asking, commanding, inviting.	*Please confirm receipt & comments by return.*
Transmissive	Simple transmission of information.	*Pls see attachment for updated fabric mill stock level*

In terms of delineating between the categories, the guidelines above proved fairly useful for the annotators. There was an initial difference of inter-annotator agreement between the last two categories in the table above which had to be addressed after the pilot test of the guidelines. On a literal interpretation the conventional construction used for most simple Transmissive acts (e.g. *Please see attached/Please refer to attached documents*) can easily lend itself to an interpretation that would place it within the Directive category; it is after all commanding the reader to do something. In clarifying the boundaries of the two categories it was decided that the Transmissive category comprised the simple transmission of information; no act was required above and beyond the absorption of the information being transmitted. The Directive category was deemed to comprise those requests whereby the initiator attempts to get the receiver to do something; something beyond simply reading information in or attached to the email.

While classifying email acts, conventionalised and implicational impoliteness devices summarized by Culpeper (2008) were also identified in the data. The model was used because it provides clear guidelines and examples. Conventionalized impoliteness devices are lexical grammatical enforcers, while implicational impoliteness is the pragmatic view of politeness which stresses the contexts (Culpeper 2011: 153).

ATLAS.ti 7 is a computer software program for qualitative research which can be used to locate, code and annotate findings in primary data, to weigh and evaluate their importance, and to visualize complex relations. The software was used to code email acts and impoliteness devices. To avoid intuitive discursive analysis – the commonplace fact that people have opinions about how different expressions relate to different degrees of politeness or impoliteness out of context (Culpeper 2011), the coding of impoliteness devices and email acts were done by two researchers and the inter-rater reliability was calculated and adjustments were made. It was fortunate that one staff on our team had about three years industry experience and some of the data was from her mailbox. She explained most of the power relations of senders and receivers and the contexts in which particular business transactions took place, which helped us greatly how to make judgements from a workplace point of view. The software analysis could systematically uncover complex phenomena hidden in emails.

3. Findings and discussion

3.1. Email acts and impoliteness

Similar to the previous findings of Goldstein and Sabin, analysis of the current corpus revealed Directives to be the most common email act in C2C communication. 212 out of the 373 emails in

the corpus were classified as having the primary intent of affecting a Directive. Also in agreement with the findings of Goldstein and Sabin, emails with the primary intent of communicating a Behabitive act accounted for a small proportion of the sample, just 2.3%. Table 2 lists the email acts found in the corpus.

Table 2: Classification of email acts throughout the corpus

Email Acts	(%) of the total emails
Assertive	9.3
Behabitive	2.3
Commit	12.7
Directive	57.5
Transmissive	18.2

Of the 373 emails, 67 contained directly observable instances of linguistic impoliteness. These findings would suggest that the majority of high stake circumstances were handled carefully, however 18% of the total still poses a significant threat to the maintenance of cordial business relations. This was why the university was invited to provide communication training to the company. In terms of the specific email acts, emails of Assertive act tend to show linguistic impoliteness. They normally involve long lists enunciating the sender's belief, imposing proclamation of some position or a statement of fact. The egoic identification with thought or form involved in the Assertive act, minus any mitigating politeness strategy would be coupled with an impoliteness device such as a message enforcer. They can be overbearing and impose upon the receiver's negative face; such an act leaving little room for the receiver to feel unencumbered by the sender.

The sample of Behabitives in the data was very small; only seven emails were regarded as indicative of some feelings. Impoliteness tended to occur within this category in situations where an apology was pre-offered but subsequently emptied of meaning with some kind of aggressive linguistic act such as a Directive issued in a harsh tone or some kind of pointed criticism. Consider the following:

(1) Dear X,
Sorry for you delivery date. I'm fully understand Garment Schedule. We will deliver on 15th (best delivery date).
Please understand our side and reconfirm.
Y

What initially appears as an apology for a late delivery of goods turns into a rather aggressive plea for the receiver to appreciate the perspective of the sender. Alternatively, there were a few examples of Behabitives in which the sender overtly expresses negative feelings as the primary intent of the email.

The Commit category accounted for emails with promises. Ordinarily a Commit should work in favour of a politeness evaluation since it essentially benefits another party. However 10% emails in this category were found with an initial commit which was reframed by some kind of negative linguistic behavior. For instance in the course of one email, the sender first committed herself to sending a consignment of goods on a given date. In the next move the sender opened with the sentence *Frankly speaking, we are trying my best…;* here the sender compromises the earlier polite act of committing to something for the benefit of the receiver by alluding to the onerous effort being made on the part of the sender.

Of the 212 Directive emails, only 17% contained impoliteness. This may indicate the fact that

Directives carry very obvious face threatening potential so senders are cognizant of the need to use politeness strategies. Blunt commands redolent of a bondage relationship can have abyssal effects upon an individual's esteem by undermining both their positive and negative face. Impoliteness tended to occur within Directive emails when a command lacked any kind of conventional politeness strategy such as a marker of attitudinal warmth or a friendly opening and closing.

As a standalone category, Transmissives had the lowest percentage of impoliteness. When impoliteness did occur, this was generally resulted from a lack of politeness devices such as an appropriate salutation as well as questionable tone.

3.2. Conventionalised Devices vs. Implicational Devices

When classifying the actual lexical grammatical constructions that gave rise to the impoliteness found within the email exchanges, Culpeper's Conventionalized and Implicational Impoliteness Devices was of great use. Conventional impoliteness devices here refers to those linguistic forms, irrelevant of context, that carry a high degree of impoliteness or more specifically bear a higher probability of an impoliteness evaluation. Implicational impoliteness, according to Culpeper (2008), are context driven. They can be unmarked in the sense that there is no overt form of impoliteness but the power relation was distorted and indirect face threatening was perceived by the participants.

3.2.1. Conventionalised devices

Most conventionalized impoliteness devices are lexical grammatical enforcers, making the majority of the impoliteness instances. Direct complaint and pointed criticism takes up 12.9% of the cases. The details of conventional impolite devices are discussed in the following:

Message enforcers

Among the conventionalized devices used, message enforcers were the most prominent category, accounting for 61 instances of impoliteness. Both lexical and prosodic enforcement devices were found throughout the data. Examples include lexical repetition of words or the use of modal verbs such as *must* and *need* and syntactical time intensifiers as well as emphatics:

(2) …according to the samples they approved before, the front bottom line is flat, then the front & back slit length MUST be different, otherwise you can not get different body length for front & back.

(3) …we can not accept the rejection base on the standard or requirement which is not written in previous instruction, this is very simple !!!

(4) We need the telexrelease, please fax us ,fax no:xxx. Urgently.

The use of modal verbs such as *must*, *should* and *need* carry a high degree of force and directness (Yasumassa, 2011; Halliday & Matthieseen, 2008). The use of *must* directly compromises the decision making autonomy of the recipient interlocutor (Yasumasa, 2010) thus curtailing the degree of personal autonomy retained as a result of the interaction. *Should*, according to Halliday and Mathiessen (2004) is a median value obligation. Whilst being less dictatorial in nature than *must*, as Yasumasa (2011) highlights, use of the modal auxiliary *should* conveys a strong suggestion. In a commercial setting where power relations are often skewed a particular way, the use of *should* would leave an agent with little choice but to bow to a superior or client. Blum-Kulka (1990) claim that want and need statements also bear a high level of forcefulness, and often occur between persons differing in rank.

Time intensifiers such as *ASAP*, whilst been somewhat of a professional cliché, particularly when used in the context of a Directive, can create an imposing tone of voice and accidentally bring about a Face Threatening Act (Kogetsidis 2011).

The creative use of punctuation was used strategically on a prosodic level as a means of impolite message enforcement; capitalisation and the repetitive use of punctuation marks featured highly:

(5) …they may say something else again this or that SHOULD BE their requirement even they did not write in their instruction, so they have to reject the goods. Then where can we stand ???

In the example above as well as those in the corpus, the emotional intimation from the use of 'shouting caps' and repetitive punctuation marks, is easy to infer. The writer's intention in the message was to make a strong assertion that he would not accept the demand of a third party; in doing so he directly encroached upon the face of the receiver. Turnage (2007) highlighted the fact that the use of all upper case capitals in any given word is the equivalent of screaming.

Complaints/Pointed criticism

Within the corpus, complaints and pointed criticism mainly consisted of negative assertions expressing discontent with regards to a certain arrangement or state of affairs, often working so as to dismiss efforts of the sender.

(6) …anyway all [your] points are not a solution we are working at the moment for.

The example in (6) is a direct rejection to the receiver's efforts. These constructions work so as to project discontent onto the sender and thus negatively impact his or her face. Other negative assertions involved constructions involving the following adjectives; *unreasonable, cheap, unfair, unacceptable* and *wrong*. It should be remembered that in a corpus of 373 emails, there were only 13 examples of complaints and pointed criticism. This may well be a product of the fact that such conventionalized impoliteness carries a high risk of conflict because of the overt attack on face it involves.

Unpalatable questions

Bousfield (2008) highlights the fact that unpalatable questions operate so as to criticize the receiver's position, stance, beliefs, assumed power and amongst other things, obligations. These questions can be both rhetorical and non-rhetorical, in other words, some request answers and others do not expect answers but to reinforce a statement. Nine unpalatable questions in the data were found to give rise to an impoliteness evaluation.

(7) The front bottom line on approval sample is flat but they expect us to make front bottom line of other sizes with round shape for production, don't you think they are kidding???

In the example above, the sender used *don't you think they are kidding* to vent his anger and indirectly blame the addressee. This act clearly attacks the receiver's face.

Condescension and Threat

Condescending and threatening acts were only observed in one email throughout the entire corpus. In the first example below, the sender uses the word *funny* to satirise the third party garment factory.

It is implied that if the receiver is in agreement with the third party then they too are subject to this supercilious admonishment; this has clear ramifications for the receiver's face; the receiver does not wish to have their positive face tarnished with the association of negative qualities such as a lack of logic but in trying to avoid this also incurs an affront to their negative face in that they are essential rendered mute on the matter and hence suffer a reduction in personal autonomy.

(8) If you say 'ABC', then ABC will be out of the business as no company can offer money like this, and both you and I will loose the job if we do business in this way!!!

Threat is generally taken as meaning a suggestion that will something unpleasant or violent will occur. In Example 8 the sender uses the impeding threat of dismissal as a way to coerce the receiver into agreement again impacting upon the receiver's negative face by diminishing his power.

3.2.2. Implicational devices

Implicational impoliteness, according to Culpeper (2008), occurs in the following circumstances:

(1) Form-driven: the surface form or semantic content of a behavior mismatches that projected by another part; or
(2) Convention-driven:
  (a) Internal: the context projected by part of a behavior mismatches that projected by another part; or
  (b) External: the context projected by a behavior mismatches the context of use.
(3) Context-driven:
  (a) Unmarked behavior: an unmarked (with respect to surface form or semantic content) and unconventionalised behavior mismatches the context; or
  (b) Absence of behavior: the absence of a behavior mismatches the context.

Two major implicational devices were recorded in the email corpus; unmarked behavior and internal mismatch. Unmarked behavior is taken to have occurred when in the absence of an overt form or semantic marked feature, an exercise of power by an agent is perceived to be an abuse of power. 13 instances of unmarked behavior were deemed to have taken place throughout the email exchanges examined.

(9) Re the fabrics holding for you, there are still 3 styles not paid. See the attached file for details. Please kindly arrange the payment as per the invoice ASAP.

(10) this style does not have snap on sleeves, I think u mix it up. Pls double check

In the first example, the sender pushes the receiver for an unpaid bill; this message operates as a direct demand for compensation and presses the receiver, who may very well feel face threatened. Locher (2008) talks of the importance of trying to avoid the use of words and constructions that carry negative connotations when delivering bad news in a commercial environment. The harsh negative tone in which the issue of the outstanding bill payment is addressed in (9) impacts upon the positive face of the receiver by implying an inability to pay for goods delivered. Example (10) above is a clear example of what Shelby and Reinsch Jr. (1995) refer to as an "I-attitude" in which the self-interested subjective perspective of the sender is dominant; fault is clearly placed on the reader thus constituting a face attack.

The phenomenon of internal mismatch was second type of implicational device detected

through research efforts. An internal mismatch according to Culpeper (2011) takes place when expressions of conventionalized politeness are mixed with conventionalized impoliteness with the general effect being impolite. These usually appear at the syntactical and lexical level. In the example below, a clear accusation of blame is preceded by a mock form of politeness; *To be honest*.

(11) To be honest, we do not understand why you never thought from a business point of view.

3.3. Functions of impoliteness

Culpeper (2011) claims that impoliteness has three specific functions; affection; coercion and entertainment. Affective impoliteness often refers to the overt, targeted display of negative emotion towards another although it can also be constituted by the overt display of positive feeling in a context that otherwise forbids the expression of emotional disposition. Coercive impoliteness seeks to achieve a state of realignment of values between perpetrator and target and is usually present in situations of unequal power balance. Entertaining impoliteness, takes the form of rudeness or humour applied to the target for the entertainment of the perpetrator or others. It is perhaps unsurprising that within external business email where a certain degree of professional decorum must be observed, no instances of entertaining impoliteness were detected. Interrogation of internal email between team members, and superiors to juniors may well expose a greater degree of this kind of impoliteness. Affective impoliteness (emphasis, blame and irony) accounted for 57% of the impoliteness; these utterances basically emphasized pre-existing stances and placed blame on other parties. Coercive impoliteness accounted for 43% of all the impoliteness recorded, mainly taking the form of demands and threats.

4. Non-politeness

Locher and Watts regard that the analysis of impoliteness is complicated and the Politeness Theory is inadequate because "impoliteness is not necessarily the opposite (or absence) of politeness" (2005). They developed a more comprehensive Relational Work Framework (RW), entailing politeness, non-politeness and impoliteness. Directness or seemingly impoliteness within a community where power relation is of less concern can be perceived as non-polite or politic. The RW may provide a more nuanced picture of (im)politeness, but how far the non-politeness concept can be applied to workplace written communication remains a question. Relationship in a workplace is far more complicated and unpredictable especially in external communication; "politeness and impoliteness do not constitute polar opposites but should rather be viewed as points along a continuum" (Schnurr et al. 2008: 212).

Given that the RW framework does not have a detailed parameter of impoliteness, non-politeness and politeness, the Politeness Theory categories will be mainly used. We expect different impoliteness strategies would be taken in inter-corporate communication and relevant data analysis can prove this. After all, politeness towards a subordinate can be interpreted as an indication that "the more powerful protagonist is concerned with constructing good workplace relations and in developing rapport and maintaining collegiality" (Spencer-Oatey 2000: 36).

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between specific email acts and the occurrence of impoliteness in the workplace email of Chinese users of English. It depicted conventional and implicational impolite devices used in dealing with high-stake business activities such as making strong requests and conveying negative messages for different communicative purposes. It is clear from the research that impoliteness is more frequent as an aspect of linguistic behavior than traditional notions would indicate; at least amongst the discourse community observed in this paper.

While conventionally polite ways of making statements, stating opinions and expressing beliefs (i.e. affecting assertive emails), e.g. through the use of hedging devices are commonly used in workplace communication, negative message enforcers seem pervasive. The impolite devices used in the workplace are found in a number of lexical and grammatical patterns. Modal verbs such as *must*, *should* and *need* carry a high degree of force and directness between persons in different social rank. Other negative assertions involve constructions with pejorative adjectives: *unreasonable, cheap, unfair, unacceptable, funny* and *wrong*. The use of intensifiers such as *very* and *exactly* can also have clear ramifications for the receiver's face. In addition, capitalization, repetitive punctuation marks and time intensifiers tend to be the channels for releasing the sender's satisfaction and negative emotion.

From a pedagogical perspective, the role of English as a global lingua franca has made English training in tertiary institutions specifically focused on preparing graduates to use English proficiently in the professions. However, business English training materials fail to reflect the big change email has brought to business communication (Evans 2012). They are found to play more emphasis on traditional prescriptive pedagogy (Crystal 2006) than on appropriate use of the language, and more on politeness strategies than on ability to deal with messages with different moods, tones, personalities and styles. Employers and educationists have therefore called for more input in linguistic and pragmatic rules that govern business email in FSL/EFL guidebooks/textbooks to make them more suitable for non-native English users (Gains 1999; Gimenez 2000; Evans 2012). Introduction to the nature of business email and both its politeness and impoliteness strategies would contribute to the quality of corporate training and ESL/EFL teaching at tertiary institutions.

As Freeman has noticed, "juggling the flow of messages and the various response styles and registers makes the workday an exercises in linguistic multitasking" (2009: 106). University students, whatever programmes they are taking, should be equipped with email skills to prepare themselves for complicated workplace communication. As a result, email writing has become a major topic in the teaching of Business English, covering linguistic and stylistic conventions and its functions in the pattern of communication in business. The findings in this study can go beyond the perspective of linguistics, the evolution of the structural rule and etiquette in emails discussed in many Business English books. The examples cited can help raise students' awareness of impoliteness in the workplace. ESP teachers can also use them to design some activities, for example, to respond to offensive messages from different parties, top-down or bottom-up, internal or external, with strategies of either using polite form to express impolite messages, or delivering the discourse with impoliteness but suitable to the norm of the business community. Finally it is advisable that teaching materials and exercises address some of the most salient causes that give rise to a potential evaluation of impoliteness. While espousing the myriad of other conventionally polite linguistic options available to a sender, textbooks and teachers alike should develop elements of course materials that explore the issue of how one addresses impoliteness, softens or mitigates negative force acted upon the recipient so as to keep a business relationship.

This study, as with any other research, has its limitations. Given the fact that the contributing company control the release of email messages, the sample size in this study is comparatively small and with some incomplete chains. It is hoped that future studies in the same vein can be better equipped with workplace data to reveal more complete intertexuality of C2C business transactions.

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"We're not here anymore": The cultural dislocations of creative organizations in outlying regions

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Abstract: The marketing communications industry, whose most visible manifestation can be found in advertising, is closely connected to creativity—so much so, in fact, that this creativity constitutes one of its cornerstones. Within the industry itself, the cult of creativity is legitimized, reaffirmed, and maintained via various competitions, the press, and professional associations, without mentioning the discourse of agencies that put creativity at the heart of their business models, adopting it as their very purpose. Yet this creative *doxa*, associated with prestigious clients and major campaigns, and spread virally by social media, appears to be the province of the major metropolitan agencies. What about the small agencies outside the major urban networks that are animated by the same *doxa*, but that rarely or never acquire high-profile clients, win awards, or produce creations whose public notoriety would legitimize their creative value? This article sets out to investigate how organizational dynamics are actualized, maintained, and debated; in short, how they are *cultivated* in the name of this regional creativity, particularly in the context of small advertising agencies in outlying regions (SAORs). Taking up the ideas of ventriloquism and based on two case studies, we will demonstrate how regionality percolates into and constantly (re)appears in the discourse of these agencies' employees. Moreover, we will demonstrate, using five "iconic figures" of creative culture, – namely seclusion, defense, distinctiveness, maturity, and expansiveness – that to maintain such a creative culture outside the legitimizing structures, SAORs must dislocate to a "creative elsewhere". In doing so, we develop a five-pronged theory of creative culture that offers a way to observe and analyze a creative industry, not based on a socio-economic or socio-political standpoint but rather on the discursive agency of the region within the organizational culture of SOARs.

Keywords: Creative culture, advertising agency, regionality, dislocation, organizational culture, discourse.

1. Introduction

To be creative, in a small agency, in an outlying region.[1] The mere evocation of this triad might cause one to smile, as if this condition were antinomic, and outside the major centers, there would be little hope of (real) creativity. Certain urban-centric views consider outlying areas as cemeteries of ambition (Bell & Jayne 2010) where the absence of creative clusters, of a creative class (Delgado et al. 2010; Florida 2003; Harvey et al. 2012), and of sociocultural vibrancy relegates creativity to a pale shadow of the industry's creative *doxa*: "With all due respect to devotees of rurality, it is in the *city* that the most creative individuals are to be found" (Froment 2012, our translation).

Yet in Quebec, Canada, such small agencies abound, accounting for more than 40% of the gross revenue generated by the province's advertising industry (CICQ 2007). Almost 30% of Quebec advertising agencies are located outside the metropolitan regions (Statistique Canada 2014). Given that creativity is the bedrock of agencies (Nixon 2003) and creative individuals, their very source of vitality (Hackley & Kover 2007), we might ask ourselves how and on what conditions SAORs and their employees are able to exist and carry on their business.

Accordingly, in this article we examine the creativity-organization-regionality triad as it relates to the creative culture of agencies. More specifically, adopting a discursive viewpoint and borrowing the ideas of ventriloquism (Cooren 2013, 2010b), we will illustrate how a great deal of these organizations' discourse constantly brings regionality into play', at the same time as it dislocates the organizational culture by situating it in a figurative "elsewhere." We maintain that this dislocation is part and parcel of the organizational culture of SAORs: indeed, to "perform"

1 In Quebec, Canada, the term "region" refers to all cities located outside the major urban centres of Quebec City and Montreal.

creativity in an outlying region, it is necessary to escape this location.

We will begin by establishing the nature of the relationship between discourse and regionality, particularly as regards creativity and via the concepts of ventriloquism and of "cultural figures." After having briefly presented the case studies that supplied the empirical material for this study, we will describe the five iconic cultural figures of SAORs' creative culture and their agency within organizations, before addressing their power in constituting the creative culture of such organizations. This in turn will allow us to propose a five-pronged theory of the creative organizational culture of SAORs.

2. On the sense of "place": discourse, regionality, and organizational culture

The literature on creative industries has looked into the conditions favourable to the emergence of creative classes (Florida 2003; Le Corf 2012), of creative clusters (Delgado et al. 2010; Porter 2007), and of cities with creative potential, whether it be real or imagined (Collis et al. 2010; Keil & Boudreau 2010).

However, some recent works (Bell & Jayne 2006; Chapain & Comunian 2010; Collis et al. 2010; Gibson 2010; Harvey et al. 2012; Leibovitz 2006) argue for a characterization of creativity that is not grounded in the standpoint of urban scripts—in other words, the idea that outlying regions must develop their creativity based on the same parameters and indicators as those in metropolitan areas—but rather that takes into account region-specific networks, practices, and cultures.

This characterization is especially relevant because non-metropolitan regions' relationship to business itself implies different entrepreneurial sociabilities and different professional pathways that affect the conditions under which professional activities are exercised.

> Atterton describes rural traditions that make certain networks acceptable and familiar, based upon the multiple roles played by individuals, in contrast to urban entrepreneurial and inter-firm behaviour of networking and clustering associated with the urban creative economy. (Bell & Jayne 2010: 212).

Yet even if the socio-economic conditions of creative industries seem critical, the fact remains that agencies' connection to their regionality is *first and foremost* about the way they experience their region, and their relationship to this experience. Soja (1996), echoed by others (Olwig 2002; Waitt 2006; Waitt et al. 2006), defines "place" as having three interdependent facets: an objective material space, the way it is imagined and represented, and the space as it is experienced by people. Waitt (2006) sums up the idea in these words:

> Cityscapes are also grounded in the material, given they are conceptualized as produced through and embedded in everyday life. Cityscapes are continually made and remade through everyday actions. Cityscapes are reflections of social practices. Therefore, beneath the groundworks and dreamworks of cityscapes lie very different social relationships. (2006: 169)

This view, culturally and symbolically co-constructed via physical and imagined representations of space, is thus conveyed through discourse, even as discourse in turn affects relationships to the "place" in question. Philipsen (1992), in an ethnography of speaking,[2] has observed how symbols

2 "The ethnography of speaking, then, consists of hearing and representing distinctive ways of speaking in particular speech communities. An ethnography of speaking is a report of a culture, as that culture thematizes communication and of the ways that culture is expressed in some historical situation" (Philipsen 1992: 9).

(vehicles of conceptions), conceptions (meanings, notions, and definitions), premises (beliefs of existence and of value), and rules (prescriptions on the prevailing behaviors in certain contexts) all ultimately lead to a cultural speech code: "a socially constructed and historically transmitted system of symbols and meanings pertaining to communication" (1992: 7-8).

2.1. Regional discourse and organizational discourse

In short, the outlying region as a "place" is as much a physical location as a culturally co-constructed site internalized and mobilized through social relationships. The region, then, acts as much as it is acted upon in discourse.

Accordingly, while it is important to take account of the economic or social forces specific to a region, in their agency, we must not perceive these forces as determinisms. This becomes especially relevant insofar as socio-economic conditions are often cited as determinisms of creative and identity work in outlying regions: "there are fewer clients," "the talent is elsewhere," "there's less innovation." As Cooren points out, in relating the work of Philipsen:

> To look at these figures or issues *only* in terms of resources would be a mistake, insofar as the fact that they are cited "in all interactions" (Sanders & Fitch, 2001, p. 265, our translation), proves that they largely define how these people perceive themselves and others. … I wouldn't go so far as to reduce being to having (or vice versa), but Tarde's lesson is crucial in that invites us to acknowledge that *any statement of identity* (I am something) *can be translated into a statement of possession* (I have something). (Cooren, 2013: 165,166, our translation; original italics).

This symbolic and objective way of seeing "place" can be related to the notion of organizational culture. Indeed, although organizations can be understood from a variety of epistemological perspectives (Grosjean & Bonneville 2011), one of these is the culture metaphor: "[…] a shared and learned world of experiences, meanings, values, and understandings which inform people and which are expressed, reproduced, and communicated partly in symbolic form" (Alvesson 2002: 6). Since we want to address a way of thinking about the relation between regionality, creativity and organization other than from a socio-economic or socio-political standpoint – the culture metaphor is well-suited to grasping how SAORs actually *experience* and cultivate regionality. This is especially relevant since, according to Martin's nexus approach, an organizational culture is informed by its ambient culture, i.e., its political, social, ethnic and economic context: "When a basic assumption generates collectivity-wide consensus, it is likely that this assumption is a reflection of cultural influences from outside the collectivity" (Martin, 2002: 165).

Alvesson (1994) likewise points out this relationship between economic and social conditions, on one hand, and how they pervade organizational discourse and define advertising agencies' work, on the other. By suggesting that although it may not be a direct reflection of reality, discourse is rooted in the material "base" [3] of the agency's working conditions, Alvesson shows that this discourse offers a way to retrace certain conditions associated with identity. An advertising agency's anti-bureaucratic culture, for instance, might serve as a base to stake out its place and achieve recognition in its field, even as it is rooted in the material reality of the agency's practices. Hence, being against hierarchy, schedules, and serial production marks a disposition within the field — creatives are free and unbridled, like wild horses — while also reflecting the material reality that this creativity is always subordinate to budget imperatives and deadlines.

The way discourse animates and is animated by regionality thus offers a way to observe how

3 Alvesson borrows from Asplund the concept of base as "…a totality of production factors, that corresponds with a defined development stage of materialistic production forces, [and that] include[s] circumstances such as e.g. material objects, places, buildings and physical distance dimension." (1994: 537).

organization is created within an SAOR. In this vein, Cooren (2010a; 2013; 2010b) suggests linking what is "cultivated" within interactions, on one hand, and the figures that are invoked through them, on the other. With his concept of ventriloquism, "the phenomenon by which an actor gives voice to another through an utterance, or more generally, a behavior" (Cooren 2013:13, our translation), Cooren illustrates that in discourse, we are animated by these figures (ideas, principles, values, and ideologies) as much as we animate them. For example, during a meeting, if I say "the budget does not allow it": this budget is a figure that makes me take decisions as much as I use it to influence other people. Hence, I animate this figure of the budget as much as it animates me. This dynamic of inter-influence—animating and being animated by a figure—makes it possible to delegate agency to texts and objects insofar as they embody these figures. The physical existence of that budget, i.e., the budget spreadsheets, embodies the ideologies conveyed by the budget figure and act as its delegate. Hence, *in the name of* these conditions of practice, certain texts and discourse come to animate the advertising agency and actively partake in its organizing (Cooren et al. 2006).

Ventriloquism furthermore provides a way to bridge the macro and the micro, structures and individual experience:

> As long as a sterile opposition is maintained between action and structure, social actors may seem or consider themselves to be powerless and to lack any real influence on the course of events, insofar as their actions appear to be disconnected from a structure (whatever it may be) that is thought to extend above and beyond their practices. (Cooren 2013: 241, our translation).

When the actions of such a figure become strong, regular, and recurrent within an organization, the figure can attain the level of *cultural figure*. Identifying and analyzing these cultural figures helps to reveal what is being re-presented and constantly, frequently, and recurrently acting within a given speech community. Indeed, as we will see, these cultural figures' embodiment and mobilization in discourse acts upon the organizational culture.

Although we are not assuming that creativity is the sole component of an advertising agency's culture, it is certainly a keystone. Indeed, this culture is founded on the trope of creativity, a posture acquired over the course of various historical and institutional struggles (Leiss et al., 1990, 2005) that actors have waged to legitimize themselves as the sole purveyors of creativity (Nixon 2003) as opposed to various other intermediaries such as media companies, public relations specialists, consultants, and the like (McFall 2004). More specifically, this creativity is based on mastering a knowledge and know-how rooted in the reflection surrounding advertising and marketing strategy campaigns and their production. These campaigns must be highly original and appropriate not just for clients and targeted consumers (Smith & Yang 2004), but also for industry actors themselves:

> […] producing new and original work was the central goal of advertising creatives and, moreover, this work had to be produced in the face of those constraints set by "mainstream" advertising and the dominant communicative ethos of the sector (Nixon 2003: 75).

It is in the name of this creativity that many organizational actions are cultivated: creative individuals are granted the most prestigious positions, the highest salaries (Smith & Yang 2004) and the most influential roles (Till & Baack 2005). Even the physical and structural organization of agencies confers special status on such individuals (Nixon 2003).

As mentioned previously, the discourse on creativity serves as both an act of legitimization and validation—thus requiring a constant effort of disambiguation—and a manifestation of the

conditions for producing and maintaining this creativity. Understanding a creative culture thus requires us to look at how the agency's organizational culture is animated by this trope of creativity within the agency, which is embodied in various cultural figures. In turn, by identifying these cultural figures, we might understand how SAORs maintain and perform their creative culture.

3. Presentation of cases and methodology

Organizations can be analyzed in many ways (see Van Maanen 1998). Since we wished to draw on conversations, discourses and relationships to organizational symbols, we determined that case studies were well suited for our study, since they allow "a deep understanding of interaction between participants, their behaviour and feelings […], and the various phenomena, processes and people involved therein" (Gagnon 2011: 103, our translation)

This article draws on two case studies conducted in two small advertising agencies located in outlying regions of Quebec (Canada), each with a dozen employees: Agency K and Agency L, both situated in the town of Villégion.[4] We chose Villégion as our region of study given that it is home to an almost equal proportion of service, commercial, and industrial businesses, and therefore exhibits significant diversity in its advertising content (tourism, industrial products, services, etc.) (Villégion annual report, 2011) and thus in the creative challenges it offers agencies.

After having reviewed the agencies that met our criteria—namely, having 5 to 19 employees and offering marketing communications services—we set out to find a first agency showing signs of an active creative culture. We visited agency websites in search of a specific creative ethos: Did the agency promote creativity? Who were its clients? How big were they? What services did they offer? We chose the initial site for our study, Agency K, not for its representativeness but rather for its situations and phenomena that connected with and informed our theoretical concepts (Jaccoud & Mayer 1997). Agency K was especially active on social networks, with several posts mentioning the agency's creativity. We contacted this agency first. To establish our second site, we enquired, over the course of interviews with Agency K, about other agencies that might be interesting for us to meet with. Agency L was mentioned several times as being representative of the "new creativity" in Villégion.

Our fieldwork began with in-depth semi-structured interviews, an interview type that is promising for determining "what is going on" in a given situation, and that tends to activate certain identity scripts (Charmaz & Belgrave 2012). In all, 33 individuals were interviewed over 51 semi-structured interviews amounting to a total of 44 hours, with each interview averaging 52 minutes long. During the interviews, we also identified opportunities to observe employees' work, including meeting clients, holding production meetings, and getting together for work meetings, all of which are ideal times to observe the dynamics that legitimize who and what is creative, as "spaces where knowledge, routines, experiences, uses and experiences can flow, be reconstructed, support problem solving, define new work avenues, etc." (Grosjean 2011: 37). During production meetings, for example, employees make their actions intelligible through references to people, places and documents, even as they are " in the process of creating" this knowledge, hence animating several cultural figures. After having noted the agency's creations and their contexts of use in our logbook, we photographed or digitized them for safeguarding purposes. In all, 90 texts and artifacts were collected.

After each visit to the agency, the interviews were transcribed and processed using the qualitative data mining software TAMS Analyzer. This program, which stands for "Text Analysis Markup System," is open-source and uses thematic markers to encode and subsequently extract and analyze data from a variety of qualitative materials, such as interviews, videos, .pdf documents or

4 To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, the names of the towns, agencies and employees have been changed.

images. Further on (see section 4), we will describe how we analyzed these materials.

In the end, both cases studies were based on a mixed methodology comprising 51 semi-structured interviews, 45 hours of non-participant observation, and a document collection process, and were examined using an embedded multiple-case design[5].

3.1. Presentation of the study sites

3.1.1. Agency K

Agency K was founded in 2009. Its clients are mainly local (54%), with 75% having their main address in Villégion.[6] Its client base is fairly eclectic; however, many (a substantial proportion) are in the real estate and construction sector. At the time of our visit, the agency was at a crossroads in terms of whether to accumulate small ad hoc assignments or create a longer-term pool of clients. The agency's sales development team had recently expanded from 1 to 3 employees, and the agency had begun receiving a few project assignments from Montreal, a major urban center 150 km from Villégion. The agency had undergone rapid growth, going from a 3-person team in 2010 to a staff of 12 as of July 2013.

3.1.2. Agency L

Agency L was founded in 2008. Although the agency has clients in Montérégie (periphery of Montreal), in the Montreal area, and elsewhere in Quebec, 72% of its 156 clients (since the agency's inception) have been located in the region. Of this number, 73% are headquartered in Villégion. However, according to the latest estimates of the managers, 50% of the agency's clients are now situated outside the Villégion area. Agency L's clients, most of whom are in services (77%), are distributed across an array of sectors, the main ones being professional services, manufacturing, and construction/renovation/building.

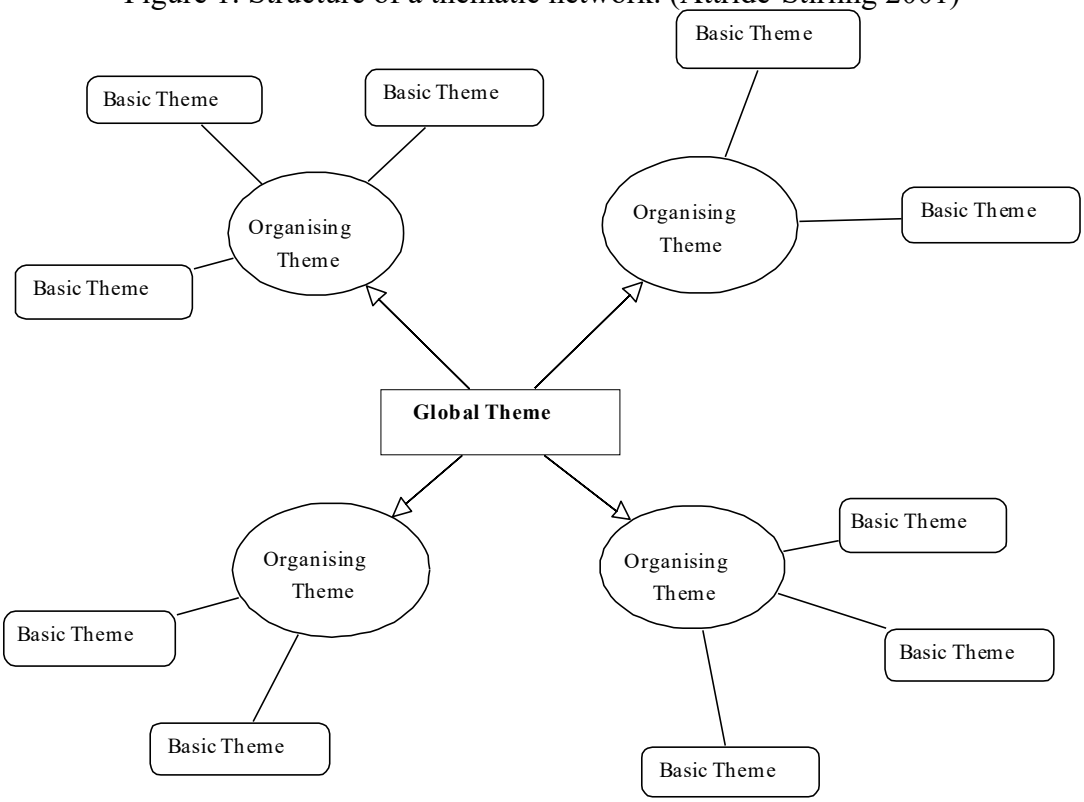
4. Geo-discursivity and the figures of regionality

In the employees' discourse, their region appears as both a constrictive dimension and a reservoir of possibilities. To study those discourses, we used Attride-Stirling thematic network analysis (TNA), which "defines and elaborates the typical, formal elements of arguments as a means of exploring the connections between the explicit statements and the implicit meanings in people's discourse" (Attride-Stirling 2001: 287). TNA constructs an interpretation by going from the specific to the general, i.e., from field materials to conceptual interpretation. This approach involves two stages, namely deconstructing and then exploring a text. Each phase is divided into sub-stages that ascend to greater levels of abstraction. This method ultimately yields a perceptual map that reveals the concentric relationship between the basic themes explicitly mentioned in empirical materials, the organizing themes that structure these basic themes, and finally the global themes that unite all the materials and offer up a conceptual interpretation of the situation under study (Figure 1).

5 The same protocol was thus adopted in addressing each unit of analysis (advertising agency), taking into account all possible levels, from individual to intermediate (employee groups) to organizational. The protocol also allowed observation of the organizations in relation to their context, as "small advertising agencies in an outlying region." Although this strategy enables comparisons, this study is not comparative per se.

6 The name of the city has been changed.

Figure 1: Structure of a thematic network. (Attride-Stirling 2001)



We thus deconstructed all of the empirical material from the study—interviews, observations, and documents—to identify which figures were animated therein. This constituted the basic theme level. The following passage is an example:

> "If I'm working with Marie-Chantal based on our budget, you know … she's used to working in Montreal, with bigger budgets and everything. I have clients, I have a big network of restaurant clients and all, but I can't be offering posters with, like, $700 visuals."

This excerpt was assigned the basic themes "constraints>regional clients," "constraints>budget" and "tension>personal experience>metropolitan area vs. region." We deconstructed the various texts and artifacts in a similar way. For example, a sticker on the back of one designer's computer monitor read "creativity with a purpose." When I asked the designer where this came from, she explained that it was the agency's creed, namely that creativity is not just about "pretty pictures" but has to meet clients' specific needs and goals. This artifact was encoded as "creativity>definition>solution." Over the course of field interactions, we refined, re-evaluated and amended these basic themes, with TAMS software enabling us to see overlaps, duplicates and "orphans." Of the 453 initial themes, we narrowed down 247 as our most convincing basic themes.

When they appeared recursively, these basic themes were organized into cultural figures (at the "organizing theme" level). We then further investigated relationships between the various figures, discovering along the way that some ascribed a certain fatality to creative work in non-urban agencies, as if the weight of their working conditions relegated them to minority or diminutive status. Other figures seemed to nuance this weight, without altogether eliminating it. Another series of cultural figures marked a break with the region by emphasizing the agency's uniqueness: "although located in an outlying region, we're different from the others." Still others

seemed to ventriloquize how the agency had become a respectable firm in spite of its regional status. Finally, another series of figures attested that the participants considered their agency as being not only unsubjected to regionality, but completely freed from this status. In all, we identified five categories of figures (global themes) that we have ranked by their "geo-discursive" distance, i.e., the distance they take from regionality, as observed in the participants' discourse: the figures of seclusion, defense, distinctiveness, maturity, and expansiveness. Each of these categories, which we will call "iconic figures," includes many cultural figures and their various embodiments, which we will present further on.

4.1. Figures of seclusion

For the study participants, regionality carries a weight. The figures of "seclusion" are embodied, first, in the *cultural figure of the lack of resources*, characterized by "regional" budgets that cut down the time for creative research; the absence of talent required for an ideal creative team; and a vision of the region as having too small a pool of interesting clients with inspiring projects: "The best resources are [in Montreal, a major city], the best clients are there, and that's where the cash is." -Félix, shareholder and account manager, Agency L.[7]

Seclusion can also be observed in the *figure of extinguished creativity*, whose manifestations include "regional clients" as narcissistic business owners who consider their advertising presence more important than their business itself; "timourous" clients who are afraid to stand out too much in the region's advertising landscape or are worried about the reactions of the people they know; and the profusion of "subsistence work," i.e., ad hoc assignments that lack vision or creative challenge: "There are shorts-sighted clients everywhere. But maybe in rural settings, they have less money." – Katherine, graphic designer, Agency K. The weight of the region is also ventriloquized through the *figure of low standards* typified by the "regional style," a look and feel that attests to the poor quality in the region: "This is the level of that narcissistic boss who says, 'well, I'm a plumber, so I'll just have a picture of myself in my plumber's attire saying that I'm a plumber" (Katherine, graphic designer, Agency K).

This seclusion is also social and relational, when it is animated by the *figure of exclusion*. Agencies subject to this figure repeatedly come up against the disparaging perceptions of metropolitan agencies when they attempt to forge business partnerships or to acquire clients located in urban centers. This seclusion is also embodied in the *figure of isolation*, in which all forms of sociability are marginalized owing to the absence of any real competition between agencies, as well as opportunities for networking and sharing best practices, which, according to the participants, is more highly valued in major urban centres: "And over there, there are more people in my field, people like me. In my field—when I was working in Montreal, I would talk design, go out to design evenings, think about design, and generally eat, breathe and sleep design. Here, there's nobody" (Katherine, designer, Agency K).

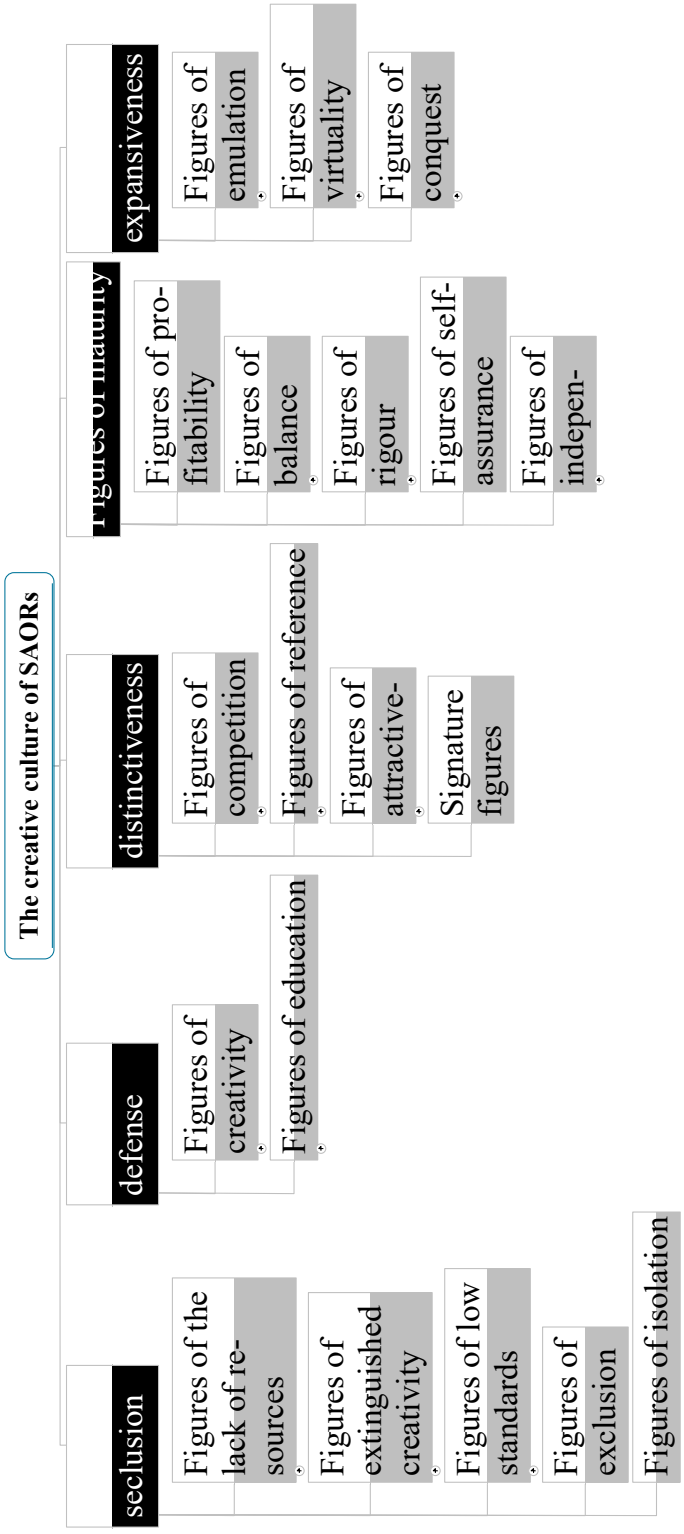
In short, for the participants, the figures of seclusion and their embodiments are frustrating effects of creative work outside major urban centres, and downgrade the creative identity of the agency and its staff.

4.2. Figures of defense

In "response" to this seclusion and its repercussions, the agency's employees defend cultural figures in order to restore their identity as creative agents.

7 All French-to-English translations of interview contents in this article are ours.

Figure 2 – Ranking of iconic figures according to their degree of geo-discursivity



They do so, first, by cultivating the *figure of creativity*, i.e., ideologies of what constitutes creativity, regardless of the agency's actual output. These different figures of creativity support a creative *doxa* that is not demanded of the agency by clients, but that the participants themselves claim to value, and to which they subscribe. Examples of this creativity include bold creativity, solution-focused creativity, resourceful creativity, avant-garde creativity, and trendsetting creativity. Moreover, this creativity must be part of an integrated 360° view that goes beyond communication tactics alone. Finally, it must allow clients to access a vision of their businesses that they would not have come to by themselves. These forms of valued creativity are as many cultural figures that act upon the work and discourse of agency members, and in whose name they recognize themselves as creative agents: "Ultimately, I think Agency L always tries to take clients further than they thought they could go" (Mélissa, graphic designer, Agency L).

Because, owing to their fearfulness or narcissism (as discussed earlier), SAOR clients are unable to "appreciate good creativity" or "are not cultured enough" to value it, the participants also cultivate the *figure of the educator*, i.e., the figure of an agency that must guide, instruct, and reassure clients regarding the value of this creativity, among other things by means of agency literature, production meetings, written guides, etc. At the time of our visit, both agencies had undertaken to produce measures and documents in order to educate their clients. In this way, they demonstrated their added value for clients who flounder in marketing communications' inherent complexity: "they think they already know what communications is because they know how to communicate, you know, they write emails. So in their mind, that's what communication is" (Julie, project manager, Agency L).

4.3. Figures of distinctiveness

By cultivating the figures of creativity, which are mobilized in client education discourse, agency staff are able to maintain their image as a distinctive agency in the figurative *ecosystem of regional competition*, that is, the landscape of competing agencies, of course, but also other intermediaries such as promotional services of local media; printers; freelancers; and other communications agencies that do not offer the comprehensive services of an "integrated" agency. This figurative competition, then, allows the agency to distance itself from the region in terms of its competitive ecosystem: "… we sort of have blinders on, you know, I—we try to look at what others are doing [in the area] but we don't find it very inspiring" (Daniel, account planning manager and shareholder, Agency L).

This figure of distinctiveness is also embodied among other things in *the figure of the reference agency***,** i.e., the benchmark agency that inspires others, that leads the creative pack by elevating the region's quality standards: "… we've always tried to deliver quality. It raises up Villégion to a whole other level; we're very pleased with that. Because when we started out, what we were coming up with was less than stellar" (Félix, account manager and shareholder, Agency L).

The quality of distinctiveness is thought to attract the top talent and the best clients, despite the region's small pool, through the *figure of attractiveness*. The figure of distinctiveness is also embodied in the *figure of the signature agency*, i.e., the agency with its own signature style prized by clients and talents alike: "It's about owning up to who we are, our image, our tone, and putting it out there … especially in the service sector; the only way to set yourself apart in services is to say here's who I am: if you like what you see, give us a call, if you don't, you can call someone else" (Luc, multimedia director and shareholder, Agency K).

4.4. Figures of maturity

Through these figures of distinctiveness, a fourth category of cultural figure is animated, namely figures that cultivate the idea that the agency has achieved maturity. Naturally, the mere fact of reaching maturity does not de facto allow the agency to break from its regional status, but it does

appear to be a prerequisite in this regard.

This mature status is embodied, first, in the *figure of the profitable agency*, in which the managers maintain that their portfolio is made up of long-standing clients; the sales development team no longer needs to actively seek out clients; and the agency is in demand by "inbound" clients for the quality of its portfolio.

Those who cultivate the figure of the mature agency do so by arguing that, in spite of the region's lack of talent, their agency's team is stable and the right people are in the right positions; these are all embodiments of the *figure of the balanced agency***:** "We're strong, we're solid. Our management is good, and our creation, operations, and finances are all good too" (Félix, account manager and shareholder, Agency L).

In addition, the *figure of the rigorous agency* is cultivated through the clarification of each employee's tasks, with a view to efficiently taking on the increasingly complex projects entrusted to the agency. Hence, the agency's workflow has been standardized, among other things thanks to project management software and clear quality control processes to handle overflow, which is a common problem during the "immature" stages: "So we sometimes struggled with having grand ideas for a project, but lacking the time to see them through, so the client had accepted, but we ended up realizing it was harder than we thought" (Christophe, graphic designer, Agency L).

This maturity maintained in the participants' discourse cultivates the *figure of self-assurance*, which in turn animates the *figure of independence* characterized by an agency that can pick and choose which clients "qualify" and are worthy of the agency's creative culture, and that can say "no" to timorous or narcissistic clients, to regional budgets, in short to the regional status of their creativity.

4.5. Figures of expansiveness

Expansiveness refers to the cultural figures that demonstrate that the agency might be in an outlying region, but that it is not a "regional agency."

This figure is first embodied in the *figure of the emulated agency*. In both their discourse and in their interior design, ways of doing things, business relationships, and so on, agencies in this case import the models and visions of the major agencies in urban centres: "So to use a, a, a stereoptypical term, we wanted to have a Montreal-type agency in Villégion. Not just in our decorations or location, but our products, the services we were offering. So we wanted to create things that would stand out, nice things, beautiful websites" (Daniel, account planning director and shareholder, Agency L).

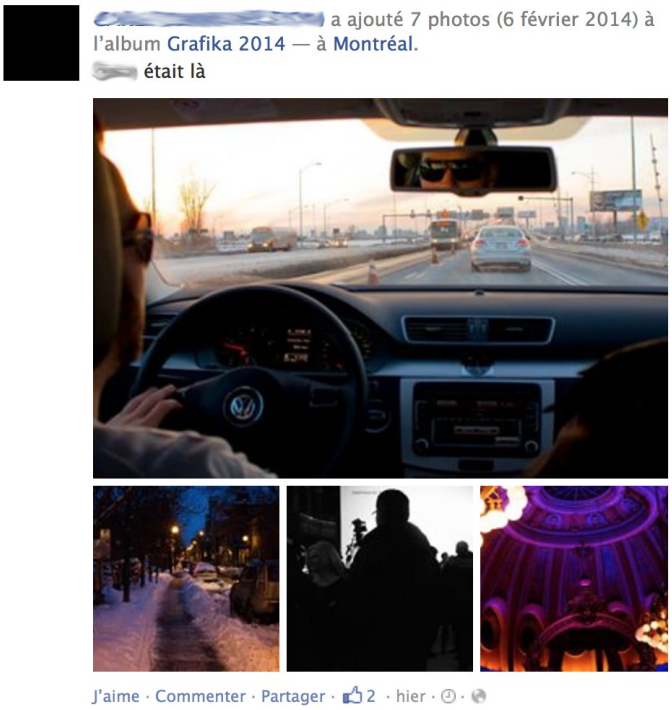
Even more interestingly, agencies can attempt to rub out their physical location by renting "ghost" offices in urban centres and integrating the names of major cities into their websites in order to attract search engine users. This process of erasing regionality animates the *figure of virtuality*, in which, thanks to digital technologies, physical location is no longer of any real importance.

The figures of expansiveness are also animated in the *figure of conquest*, an embodiment of the agency's aspirations to conquer the "big league," with short-term development plans allowing it to rent an office or at least do business in a big city.

Finally, in spite of the hermetic character of industry competitions, where most prizes go to the major metropolitan agencies, the study participants believe in the importance of attending such competitions to rub shoulders with the best, to showcase their own products, and to forge ties with industry players. At the time of our visit, Kathering and Véronique, two graphic designers, had just returned from the Councours Grafika[8] (Figure 3).

8 "The Grafika competition, which recognizes the best graphic design productions in Quebec, is back for an 18th consecutive year. … The competition is an initiative of Grafika and organized by Infopresse, in collaboration with the Société des designers graphiques du Québec (SDGQ)" (http://concours.infopresse.com/grafika/a-propos, our

Figure 3: "Grafika 2014" photo album from the Agency K Facebook



On their return, they summarized what they had witnessed to the entire team.

> Last week we had a meeting. The artistic directors presented the events at Grafika in Montreal and everything. So that's where we see ideas and everything, it helps us. You know, there was a small website component, and that's my passion, it's what allows us to bring in new ideas. Meetings like that are what help us learn and grow. (Charles, programmer, Agency K).

5. Discussions: cultivating creativity from a regional perspective

Bringing to light the various figures that animate SAORs allows us to identify several constitutive dynamics of their creative culture: first, in the way they help build a rampart against their region, "a place within a place," but also, in the projective nature of these figures, which allows SAORs to dislocate their culture to a figurative elsewhere.

5.1. Endogenous legitimizations: creating a "place within a place"

First, faced with the effects of regional "seclusion," SAORs must maintain the sense of a cohesive identity: in spite of the weight of shy clients, regional budgets, low standards, and their sense of exclusion and isolation, they must feel creative and successfully keep up a creative image.

Ventriloquism thus shows what is summoned up to give the agency stature and weight—in short, authority—in the context of interactions:

> We look (and really can be) more powerful because we are recognized as *mobilizing* various beings[9] when we act, authorize something, or make a decision. …This kind of

translation).

9 In his article on ventriloquism, Cooren defines beings as "anything that seems effectively to act in our world … I am

> authority is not manifested only for the duration of an act or turn of talk, but must also be recognized and taken into account by others, which indicates that it is indeed *co-constructed*, hence justifying the place of dialogue, interaction, and communication in general as a privileged site for the establishment of this authority (Cooren 2013: 111 [original italics])

In this respect, figures of maturity reveal themselves to have an important function: they grant permission to refuse the status of mere producer. Indeed, showing oneself to be confident or to have earned trust depends in part on the ability to demonstrate rigorous work and the embodiment of the forces required to produce it. If rigour and balance are cultivated, embodied and shared in procedures, hiring, and other manifestations of maturity, then employees can more readily allow themselves this self-assurance. Marie-Chantal, copywriter and account manager at Agency K, says, on the subject of this rigour, "For sure it isn't perfect, but we have more structure, we follow up more closely on our projects and we have a better handle on where we're going, and I think that *shows through* in our work and how *we're viewed from the outside*."

The figures of distinctiveness likewise play a part in this authority. SAORs, each in their own way, uphold that they are different and more integrated than others, and that they have achieved this status among other things by distancing themselves from their competitors within the figurative ecosystem of competition. In short, the figures of distinctiveness extract the agency from its condition by supporting an image of the agency as being in the region, but not entirely of the region. Moreover, the figures of distinctiveness cultivate and are cultivated by the sense that the agency is leading the pack, so much so that it is extracting the region from its low standards.

All of these embodiments of figures of distinctiveness, along with figures of maturity, enable a sense of self-assurance, allowing employees to legitimize their work based on these internally cultivated figures of distinctiveness.

The participants hence conceive the sense of a place within a place, a stronghold that offers protection while holding off the "regional invader." According to Philipsen, thanks to this "sense of place," they can "… see boundaries, social and physical, where others do not, and this vision serves as a major unifying perception in their worldview" (Philipsen 1992: 41).

It is interesting to note that this symbolic stronghold is built on a fragile foundation. In the employees' discourse, all the agencies that are "worthy" of being their competitors are also strategic, creative, reflexive, and innovative, yet the employees perceive their own as different. Nixon (2006) sees in this meliorative discourse a "narcissism of minor differences," i.e., in the face of similar constraints and challenges—ultimately, all agencies must contend with small budgets, timorous clients, and the need for client education—the participants stress a handful of minor differences in their conception of creativity and pursuit of innovation. In the case at hand, some agencies are perceived to take better care of their clients; others, to have an eye for detail in their programming or design; still others, to offer wiser advice. However, these are minor differences, since no client would be able to discriminatingly appreciate[10] this carefully crafted programming, different design, or maturity. The following conversation between Marie-Chantal, copywriter and account manager, and Luc, multimedia director and shareholder, is telling in this respect:

> "Luc: Because it's all in the details and that's often where it's at: in the details where if

thinking, for example, of those curious beings we call ideas, principles and values, ideologies, standards, laws, regulations, procedures, statutes, but also on another level organizations, groups and societies" (Cooren 2010b: 39, our translation).

10 Such a degree of client sophistication, implying the knowledge to appreciate minor differences, only comes with proper training and long and extensive experience in communications (Koslow et al. 2006), which is rarely the case with SAOR clients.

> you have no comparison, you're going to say, 'hey, you're charging me extra for the same thing'."
>
> "Marie-Chantal: Some people have no eye for these things, but sometimes if you have nothing to really compare with, you can't put your finger on it, you won't catch that the agency used Arial [font] instead of Gotham."

In the name of this nearly imperceptible quality, which implies that the result also contains a reflection, the participants maintain, *among themselves*, that such a difference is notable enough to justify their agency's distinctiveness. More interestingly still, the claim of a unique and distinctive touch is oddly universal. Martin et al. speak of a uniqueness paradox: "Thus, a culture's claim to uniqueness is expressed through cultural manifestations that are not in fact unique" (Martin et al. 1983: 439). Cultivating uniqueness offers a way to legitimize and make tolerable positions that seem contradictory: indeed, how it is possible to escape the status of a regional agency when that is precisely what one is? The agency's claim to have a unique creative culture in a sense allows it to don "blinders," to "look elsewhere" (as discussed earlier), but also to demonstrate that the inherent challenges of being a SAOR are external to the agency. In other words, the agency considers that it has all it takes to be a leading agency, but is unable to achieve this status because of constraints beyond its control. Thus we can see how SAOR staff activate figures in order to distinguish themselves and, once more, to *be something other than a regional agency.*

The function of this "place within a place" in organizing the culture of SAORs can be linked with the figure of isolation. Indeed, in the absence of professional sociabilities, compounded by an ecosystem where actors cultivate the idea that there are no other agencies offering job opportunities for truly creative individuals, employees *must* in a sense uphold this sense of a "place within a place" that protects their creative identity. Contrary to what is set forth in the literature on creative industries (Leiss et al. 1990, 2005; McFall 2004; Nixon 2003), employees do not work at SAORs merely to build up their resumés, or to develop social capital by moving horizontally from one agency to the next. Thanks to the internal legitimization we have described, the creative culture of SAORs makes it possible to revive the ambition that was destined for the cemetery of regionality (Bell & Jayne 2006). Experientially speaking, this function of a "place within a place" is reassuring, legitimizing, comfortable (Massey 1993 1994), and necessary in order to have a positive experience of creative work (Hesmondhalgh & Baker 2011) in spite of the effects of the figures of seclusion.

In the absence of exogenous legitimizing structures—including awards, competitions, trade press, and professional associations—SAORs, then, strongly cultivate legitimacy on an internal basis. Hence, we can see the even greater emergence of what Soar (2000) considers to be a "short circuited code-decode" loop, in which the consumption and production of a culture are kept behind closed doors. In this context, regional competition is non-threatening and the dominant models do not really apply. This is altogether unique to the SAORs under study, given that the ethos of the major agencies in the metropolitan circuit, conversely, is built up in opposition to the dominant discourse:

> … producing new and original work was the central goal of advertising creatives and, moreover, that this work had to be produced in the face of those constraints set by "mainstream" advertising and the dominant communicative ethos of the sector. (Nixon 2003: 75).

5.2. Dislocating culture to counter creative saturation

The geo-discursive weight of regionality is even greater when examining the link between

production and consumption, as in the case of agencies' creation of advertising for regional clients. The figurative region then shows through clearly in the *figures of seclusion*. The region is considered to be low in resources (*figures of resources*), inspiration (*figures of extinguished creativity*), and standards of ambient communicational culture (*figures of low standards*). What is cultivated in the discourse associated with this production-consumption is what we might call a form of *creative saturation*, which could be summed up as follows:

- Being creative requires sophisticated or cultivated clients;
- However, in this figurative region, sophisticated clients are rare;
- The region does not support good creation: it lacks good creative output;
- To attract sophisticated clients, what is needed is added value based on the team's skills, which must be displayed through its association with prestigious clients (who are hard to find outside the metropolitan centres);
- Hence the agency cultivates the idea that it will only achieve its full potential elsewhere.

In terms of consumption/production, this cultivated impression of saturation leads the agency to seek clients outside its home region. Above all, as we have seen, it leads the agency to project itself, through the figures of expansiveness, to this desaturated elsewhere.

There is something particularly interesting to note here about the agency of cultural figures: not only do they ventriloquize what matters to the agency and its staff, but they also orient them in a certain direction. Many figures of expansiveness can be observed to be projective: finding inspiration elsewhere, emulating a Montreal culture or agency, or identifying with a creative *doxa* become as many "elsewheres" that can never be attained, even as they constitute possibilities that must be attained. Hence, dislocation makes it possible to be somewhere while simultaneously being elsewhere. Moreover, the movement is projective: these cultural figures seem to push in the direction of the elsewhere as much as they import its features. Hence the figures' projective force. They can indeed be powerfully influential when they "encourage" the agency to create a page addressed to *potential* clients from urban centres, when they pervade the agency's development plans, when they are embodied in performance measures, and when they result in sending off employee delegates to competitions so they will come back with new practices. Hence the projection associated with figures of expansiveness takes place upstream, acting like a vision that employers, and especially managers, would like to see realized: "… managers try to represent their companies in as bright colours as possible, perhaps sometimes thinking or hoping that 'visionary' statements one day may come true" (Alvesson 2004: 80).

This creative saturation leads to an ideology of creativity in SAORs which, as we have maintained, is exogenous to the agency, situated in a creative elsewhere.

In fact, on closer examination, this figure of "*elsewhere*" is the iconic figure that seems to unify all the others. Indeed, as we have noted, the figures of expansiveness act antinomically, *against the name of*, the region and its haunting figures of seclusion. The result is that the discourse of expansiveness, with its projective character, brings into play an elsewhere that is not really present in the discussion, but most assuredly present in the backdrop.

To examine this phenomenon from a different angle, if Agency L and Agency K were located in a metropolitan area, this elsewhere would certainly not be marked by the same figures. For example, the two agencies would not need to virtualize their regionality by leading others to *believe* in their Montreal presence. They would not display Montreal-based samples of work (emulation) to *avoid* shooting themselves in the foot by showcasing regional samples of work. When one considers the importance of client education in production-consumption, and the fact that this education is based on figures that are elsewheres, the full importance of dislocation in the creative culture of SAORs becomes apparent.

6. Conclusion

To study a creative culture located on the sidelines of the legitimizing institutions thus supposes, from a ventriloquism standpoint, that we observe which figures are in place to support a sense of coherence in the culture of an SAOR that is confronted with its regionality. It seems obvious that when it comes to *regionality*, identities are supported by meliorative internal discourse that is *antinomic*—literally against the name of—a particular figurative view of this region. From the agency's standpoint, its region is home to fewer clients, talents, and resources, but *what counts* for its organizational culture is to remember that it identifies with the cultures of Montreal agencies, i.e., creative cultures that lie outside the region.

In sum, analysis of various iconic and cultural figures allows us to suggest a five-pronged theory of creative culture:

1- SAOR employees endogenously and self-referentially cultivate and legitimize a sense of identity coherence through the cultural figures of distinctiveness;
2- This sense of a cohesive identity is made possible by the experience of a "place within a place," which spares the agency's culture from the weight of regionality;
3- Employees cultivate a maturity that is "performed" through their search for rigour and balance between their team members, thus bolstering a sense of creative confidence and independence;
4- This maturity allows them to project themselves to a creative elsewhere that they cultivate and to which they tend;
5- The first three processes (distinctiveness, maturity, and expansiveness) are propped up against the haunting figures of regionality, which seclude the agency even as they produce a "place within a place" and an almost permanent dislocation of the agency's culture.

Using ventriloquism to assess the organizational culture of SAORs, we offer a new way to observe and analyze the relation between regionality, organizations and creativity without succumbing to the deterministic view of creative industries theories, and by better uniting the macro and the micro levels throughout organizational discourse. Looking at the figures that are animated and embodied in organizational discourses as well as the geodiscursive agency of the region within a given organization, we can see how SAORs maintain and perform their creative culture, from a non urban-centric point of view.

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Professional discourse and professional identities at cross-purposes: Designer or entrepreneur?

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Abstract: What happens when designer dreams meet business reality? This paper illustrates how a group of professional designers experienced emotional tensions and conflicts of personal and professional identity during an eight-week voluntary course on business and entrepreneurship for the creative professions. The designers' discourse, which revolved around ideals of commitments towards artistic integrity, aesthetics and design, clashed with the hard core discourse of business which highlighted practical concerns relating especially to market considerations and the necessity of adapting designs to existing means of production. Intellectually, the designers agreed on the need to develop business skills to improve their financial situation and enhance their employability. Emotionally, however, their choice of discourse, metaphors and framing strategies reflected a series of professional and personal conflicts and struggles of identity.The study illustrates the oscillating nature of designers' identity negotiations between business and design but offers no one-size-fits-all solution to business training for the creative professions. The data reflect that identity negotiations do not take the form of a linear process in which logic, material concerns and business sense will eventually prevail. To facilitate the potential incorporation of business thinking into the professional identity of designers, the data indicate that business related training targeting the creative professions would benefit from paying increased attention to the influence of professional discourse and sensemaking patterns on the construction of personal and professional selves. The study contributes to communication research on the interrelated fields of discourse and identity in professional contexts in which studies of transient and oscillating professional identities are scarce. This issue is of particular relevance in the present Danish labour market in which the focus on business-related employability dominates educational and academic agendas.

Keywords: Designers, business, professional identity, professional discourse, sensemaking, passion.

1. Introduction

The present study illustrates how conflicts of professional discourse and professional identity emerged as a group of 25 professional Danish designers specializing in jewellery design, fashion design, graphic design, installation art etc. voluntarily participated in an eight-week course on business and entrepreneurship in order to improve their career opportunities and enhance their employability.

The idealistic discourse of art and design clashed with the hard core discourse of business and gave rise to conflicts of identity at both personal and professional levels. Intellectually the designers agreed on the need to develop business skills to improve their financial situation. However, during the course on business and entrepreneurship, the designers' discursive choices and framing strategies reflected emotional experiences of professional and personal conflicts and struggles of identity: “It's a challenge to accept that you have to choose between professional values and business values”; “You need to be true to yourself and to keep your integrity”; “I don't want to accept multiple identities”; “We must stand by our values”.

As explicated in the findings, the discourse of the participating designers revealed feelings of being trapped between conflicting and potentially incompatible professional identities. The professional discourse and identity of business and entrepreneurship clashed with integrated designer ideals of artistic integrity and personal authenticity.

2. Method and data

The study is anchored in phenomenology as it is concerned with explicating the participating designers' individual and personal experiences of the voluntary course on business and

entrepreneurship. Due to the complexity and open nature of phenomenology, the question of what constitutes a phenomenological study is debated (Norlyk & Harder 2010). The present study was guided by the methodology of Reflective Lifeworld Research in which the philosophy of phenomenology is mediated to a scientific research approach (Dahlberg et al. 2008). This approach implies the study of the everyday world of experience and aims at describing phenomena as they are lived before adding any theoretical explanations.

A phenomenological approach requires the researcher to strive to bridle all cultural and personal preunderstandings and to constantly reflect critically on the importance of avoiding preconceived notions in order to let the data speak for themselves rather than imposing personal ideas on the material (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 125-130). Critical questions regarding the researcher's role and the inherent danger of limiting alternative interpretations of data constitute a perpetual challenge within a phenomenological approach. The researcher must avoid giving verbal and non-verbal feedback during interviews and must constantly question interpretations of data by asking questions such as "Are other potentially conflicting interpretations possible?".

The descriptive nature of phenomenology and its focus on illuminating individuals' personal experiences of a given phenomenon provide researchers with a "methodology that remains rigorously open to emergent change". (Küpers et al. 2013: 96). Although sparingly applied in research on business and entrepreneurship, phenomenological approaches are increasingly applied in studies of social, professional and organizational arenas ranging from studies of nursing (Norlyk & Harder 2009), studies of the vocational professions (Conklin 2012), and studies of organizational communication and strategic management (Küpers et al. 2013).

2.1. Data

The data consist of researcher's recordings of designers' discourse throughout the course and of interviews with participating designers at the end of the course. At the start of the course, the researcher was introduced as a non-participating recorder of participants' use of discourse, metaphors and framing devices. In order to avoid influencing participants' discursive choices during the course, the researcher's role was explicated as that of a passive observer and recorder of discourse. In combination, the data collected through observation and the data based on the subsequent interviews with participants described below constitute a whole set of data of participants' discursive choices.

Interviews consisted of 12 in-depth interviews with participating designers each lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. Due to the descriptive focus of phenomenology, interviews were based on designers' individual and spontaneous accounts of their experiences. Accordingly, interviews were loosely structured and centred on recording participants' individual experience of the course on business and entrepreneurship. The research questions concerned designers' experience of the course and of the business framework as a potential challenge to their professional identity as designers. Interviews took the form of open questions of a purely descriptive nature inviting participants to reflect on their experience. The opening question was "How did you experience the course on business and entrepreneurship?" The participants were then encouraged to describe concrete situations and experiences, which were subsequently followed by questions of a probing nature such as "what were your thoughts in that particular situation?". Subsequently, interviews were transcribed, read and reread. Bearing in mind the importance of bridling personal preunderstandings, the researcher undertook an analysis which focused on discovering patterns of meanings and their variations as explicated by Dahlberg et al. (2008).

During the process of analysis of the total set of data from observations and interviews the researcher reflected critically on variations of meanings as expressed in the participants' use of discourse, metaphors and framing devices by constantly challenging the interpretation of data and by asking questions regarding alternative interpretations of meaning. Subsequently, a clustering of

meaning took place as presented in the findings of section 5.

3. Theoretical framework

Sections 6 and 7 discuss the findings in a theoretical framework of an interdisciplinary nature involving studies on a) discourse, metaphors and framing, b) studies on identity in a business and organizational context, and c) studies on sensemaking and sensegiving processes in organizations.

Part a bases its understanding of discourse and framing on the works of for example Fairhurst (2011), Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Fiss & Zajac (2006) and Entman (1993) and draws from their studies of discursive choices, framing devises, and preferred metaphors in organizational and societal discourse. Part b refers to research on professional identity as exemplified by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003), Kirpal (2004), and Ancona (2012) in their studies on definitions and redefinitions of professional identity in changing organizational and societal contexts in which identities are being challenged by new systems of meaning. Part c concerns the sensemaking and sensegiving patterns in organizations and provides the theoretical conceptualization of how identity is perceived and executed in professional settings. This section draws on the conceptual framework of e.g. Weick et al. (2005), Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991), and Whittle et al. (2015). The discussion of sensemaking is based on Weick's definition of sensemaking as "the making of sense" (1995: 4), i.e. a cognitive means that enables individuals to understand, predict and adapt to changes. Sensegiving on the other hand concerns "the ability to shape the way others make sense" (Whittle et al. 2015: 378) involving the strategic communication of an organization's preferred vision and identity (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991).

In combination, the threefold structure of the theoretical framework allows for a deeper understanding of the negotiation of professional identities in transit as the interdisciplinary structure constitutes a multi-layered approach moving from the micro level of professional discourse to the macro levels of professional identity and sensemaking patterns in an organizational and business context as presented in sections 6 and 7.

4. Case and background

The eight-week course on business and entrepreneurship took place in Denmark. The course aimed at facilitating a transition of designer ideas into a context of business and entrepreneurship in order to facilitate career opportunities for professional designers and to improve their employability in a labour market under pressure. From a business point of view, the course was part of a five year project concerning the potential use of design in Danish companies' business models and the integration of design as a competitive advantage. The course was funded by a series of different agents including the European Regional Development Fund, Danish Design Centre, Danish Designers' Cooperation, University of Southern Denmark, local government and other regional platforms concerned with facilitating the use of design in a business or entrepreneurial context. The course was of an experimental nature and did not fall within the framework of a formal academic program. However, participating designers were required to possess a formal design degree or diploma in design. The course was conceptualized and taught by business representatives, established entrepreneurs, representatives of Danish Designers' Cooperation, and professors of entrepreneurship, marketing and design from colleges and universities.

The 25 designers enrolled in the eight-week business course all participated on a voluntary basis. To be admitted, the designers had to present a motivated application explicating their design concept and, upon acceptance, pay a modest fee to take part in the course. Towards the end of the course designers were required to present a professional business plan which was subsequently evaluated by a group of specialists and representatives of the business and entrepreneurial environment. The acceptance of the business plan did not involve formal academic exams, degree or diploma.

5. Findings: four dominant clusters

Based on the total data set four dominant lexical clusters were identified in the designers' discursive choices, metaphors and framing devices. The lexical clusters were based on frequency and patterns of meaning. Described in further detail below, the dominant clusters revolve around the following themes: a) experiences of physical force related to the body; b) experiences of conflicts of identity; c) experiences of the enemy; and d) experiences of entrapment.

Table 1: An overview of clusters

Cluster one: experiences of physical force related to the body
Cluster two: experiences of conflicts of identity. Who am I?
Cluster three: stereotypes and experiences of the enemy
Cluster four: experiences of entrapment

Table 1 above presents a brief overview of the four dominant clusters in the data. In the following, each cluster is exemplified. Subsequently, sections 6 and 7 discuss the findings in a theoretical framework of discursive choices, patterns of framing, identity negotiations and sensemaking strategies.

5.1. Cluster one: experiences of physical force related to the body

Designers' descriptions of their experiences of the training course in business and entrepreneurship revealed a shared experience of physical force as expressed the choice of metaphors relating physical force to bodily experiences as illustrated in the examples below. On the one hand, physical force was experienced as threatening to the individual's identity as a professional designer. On the other hand, designers also acknowledged the potential dynamics of force in situations which required them to incorporate the role of design entrepreneurs and to perform in an alien business context. The data reveals that participants' shared experience of force is of a concrete and physical nature as illustrated below.

Cluster one reflects discursive expressions of a physical, almost aggressive nature. These expressions are related to experiences of change and of moving away from secure locations (i.e. the designers' workshop) to places of an unknown and potentially dangerous nature (i.e. the business world). “I need to be kicked out of my workshop”; “Somebody has to force me”; “I need to have my backside kicked”. On the other hand, the analysis of the designers' discourse also revealed that the negative image of force was complemented by the positive consequences of having been forced. A set of positive sports metaphors reflects designers' acknowledgement of the advantages of having been forced to become a team player. Being a team player enabled them to transcend a purely individual framework and presented new possibilities for professional and personal self-realization: “I need to be part of the team”; “At present I play in my own court yard”; “I've got to play ball”. Still, the choice of verbs such as “need to” and “got to” indicates an element of experienced force.

Concrete experiences of force also included designers' experiences of hands-on selling exercises in which the designers were asked to contact potential business partners to present a sales pitch. Many designers protested vehemently as they found these exercises incompatible with their personal and professional identity as designers. Tension was running high. Some designers spontaneously walked out on the training too infuriated to speak, whilst others refused point blank to take part in the sales training activities. Unexpectedly, state of the art mobiles went suddenly dead or sick children had to be immediately attended to.

Applying what he later described as constructive force, the sales instructor insisted that designers had to practice their sales pitch in a real business context. Much to their surprise those designers, who reluctantly took on the challenge, subsequently reported that: “It was actually quite

easy"; "He [the potential business contact] was quite friendly and asked me to call back"; "I'm not afraid any more". For some fear and anxiety as concerns sales and marketing activities remain a difficult challenge: "Although none of us has had mega-negative experiences [in the contact with potential business partners] fear dominates everything".

However, looking back on the sales training and their initial reluctance to participate in this basic hands-on business activity, several of the designers subsequently described their forced training as a positive experience of breaking new ground and of transcending boundaries at a personal level.

5.2. Cluster two: experiences of conflicts of identity. Who am I?

The analysis of the data illustrates that the concept of professional identity represents a major concern for the designers as their professional identity constitutes a central part of their understanding of self. Personal and professional identities converge into a shared commitment to authenticity and integrity at both professional and personal levels.

The discourse reveals that the course in business and design entrepreneurship was experienced as challenging the designers' professional identity. Could they stay true to their designer identity if they were to incorporate a business identity? Could conflicting and competing identities co-exist? Intellectually, designers acknowledged the need to compromise on personal and professional values to succeed in a business context. Emotionally, however, designers experienced the business and entrepreneurial identity as a direct attack on their personal and professional integrity as reflected in the following statements: "We need to do things our way"; "You need to be true to yourself and to keep your integrity"; "I don't want to accept multiple identities"; "I *am* these designs"; "My hands speak for me".

The discourse reflects that the designers' professional identity is based on immaterial values of an aesthetic and intellectual nature connoting concepts such as purity, authenticity, and aesthetics. The analysis of the designers' discourse illustrates that some designers favour a quasi-religious discourse such as "holy calling" and "sacred creative powers" when characterizing designer identity and core design values. Other characterizations of professional identity reflected a discourse revolving around a set of immaterial qualities such as imagination, poetry, reflection, innovation and play emphasizing designers' obligation and ability to think outside the box and to respect aesthetic demands: "As a designer you create things that don't yet exist"; "I want to please the eye and to create 'eye pleasure'".

The problems of juggling and balancing conflicting professional identities, i. e. the artistic and creative demands of design versus the hard-core demands of business, are likewise reflected in the designers' discourse throughout the course. Key business values and key business terms such as production, standardization, costs, finance, logistics, marketing and sales etc. do not possess the emotional appeal of core designer values as described above: "By nature I tend to forget the stuff that doesn't interest me"; "Budgets, cash flow, business plans … not particularly interesting… On the other hand [knowing about it] might save me trouble later on".

5.3. Cluster three: stereotypes and experiences of the enemy

The discourse and metaphors found in the data reveal a set of deeply rooted stereotypes in relation to both business and design. Stereotypes, pre-understandings and preconceived opinions of the business world characterize designers' discourse. Representatives of especially sales and marketing stand out as stereotypical images of the enemy. Discursive choices and metaphors reveal that, for several designers, caricature representations of the sales man represent their ultimate image of the enemy: "Sales?"; "Sales man?"; "Hell, no!".

For the designers participating in the course the stereotypical caricature of the sales man represented the number one enemy. The negative and very emotional reactions to sales activities

and designers' negative framing of the sales man are characteristic of the discursive choices and metaphors reflected in the main part of data. Sales men are characterized as being notoriously unreliable, superficial, and hyper materialistic. They possess no understanding of immaterial values and are oblivious to the importance of aesthetics and design. This is reflected in discursive references to sales representatives as "smarmy, second hand car dealers" and "sleek, big city guys". Other examples of enemy images and stereotypes of the business world are reflected in designers' discursive choices when describing banking and finance. As the course requires designers to present a concrete business plan for potentially setting up in business, an ongoing dialogue with representatives of banking and finance constitutes an essential part of the designers' training in business and entrepreneurship. Again professional identities clash. In the designers' discourse this clash is reflected in descriptions of accountants and financial advisors as "spread sheets in suits", "hard-core business guys" and "personified versions of Excel".

However, towards the end of the business course, references to business-related stereotypes and images of the enemy become less frequent. Although the designers' discourse still reflects the conflict between professional designer identity and professional business identity, the discourse also provides examples of an increasing intellectual understanding and acceptance of the importance of the business aspect: "My designs… Well, it *is* business… After all, I'm making *money*".

Still the integration of design and business constitutes an emotional and moral challenge and many designers find it hard to incorporate the intellectual understanding of business demands into their personal and professional identity: "Sometimes I really do see myself as being a part of the business world… I think I can learn the ropes… But then, later, when they [course instructors] talk about different types of costs and budgeting … hard core business… Then I feel disheartened. Am I a part of this? Can I do it? After all, you need to stay true to your core values".

Towards the end of the course on business and entrepreneurship a smaller group of designers openly acknowledge the usefulness of being able to perform successfully in a business context as reflected in the following statement: "I don't want to be considered a naïve designer"; "I want to be in control".

5.4. Cluster four: experiences of entrapment

The last cluster in the data revolves around the participating designers' experiences of loss of freedom and feelings of being trapped in the potential transformation process from designer to design entrepreneur. The free spirit of the designer is confronted with the structured framework of business thinking which designers experience as rigid and alien: "I'm afraid of being stuck into a box".

Gradually, however, the discourse of some designers reflects a growing awareness and acceptance of the necessity of being able to navigate in business waters. For several participants, the initial experience of being caught in a sea of restrictive systems and inflexible boxes gradually seems to have given way to a more balanced view in which both worlds potentially may coexist in an uneasy symbiosis characterized by sudden flashes of existential fear and self-doubt.

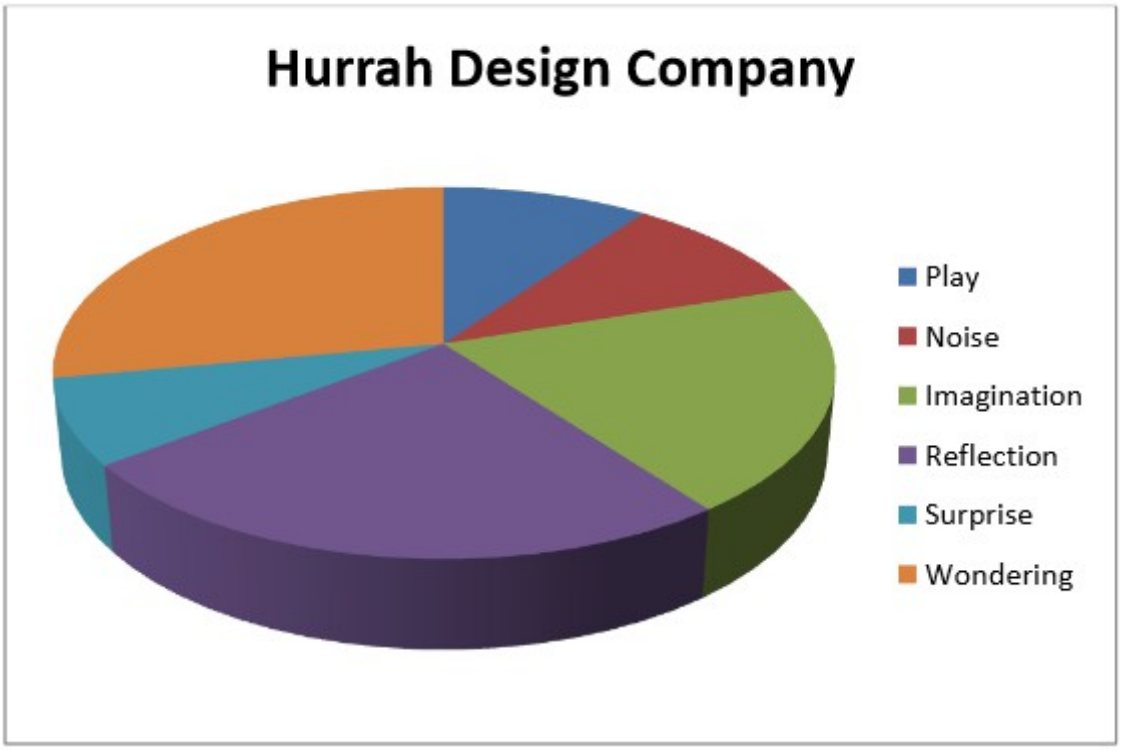
On the one hand, the participating designers fear that they risk losing their identity as designers if they incorporate entrepreneurial thinking and business values into their understanding of self. On the other hand, refusing to accept business and entrepreneurial thinking, may lead to a life of non-recognition, waste of talent and a constant struggle to survive financially. Discursive choices illustrated that the maximization of potential profit is not an issue for the participating designers. Instead, the driving force is primarily rooted in a personal and professional ambition to achieve professional recognition and to be acknowledged as a unique designer. Motivation is about name and fame rather than fame and fortune: "I just want to be able to make a living … my dream is not to become a millionaire… I just want to survive"; "What I really want is for my *name* to be recognized".

The designers' initial fears of losing their creativity and their artistic freedom in the context of business models, production plans, taxes and logistics are reflected in statements such as "I'm afraid of being stuck into a box"; "Those boxes full of business models … that was some roller coaster ride". However, during the final stages of the course, the discourse of some designers reflects a partial acceptance of the usefulness of being able to think in terms of boxes and systems. Occasionally, the discourse reveals that the concept of boxes and systems may be redesigned to suit individual designer identities: "I might just make round boxes instead of square ones"; "Sometimes it hard to see yourself as a person in boxes… Still … maybe you can make your own box and change it a little".

In spite of occasionally feeling powerless and overwhelmed by the demands of the business world, some designers gradually accepted that, in order to establish themselves in a business related context, they needed to "learn the ropes". Others, however, experienced the business framework as painful, alienating and extremely frustrating: "VAT, business plans, contribution margins, fixed costs, tax allowances, tax reductions … it's absolutely mind blowing".

Working on their business plan, a small group of installation artists produced the business diagram below, Figure 1, to illustrate part of their vision for Hurrah Design Company. The diagram exemplifies how designer discourse and designer thinking challenge traditional business representations of structure and order illustrated in visual presentations of tables, statistics, and standard business diagrams.

Figure 1: Designers' tongue-in-cheek version of a traditional business diagram



To explicate the role of designers' discourse, section 6 relates the findings to a theoretical framework of discourse, framing and identity. Subsequently, section 7 discusses the findings in relation to a theoretical framework of sensemaking and sensegiving processes.

6. Discursive choices, framing and negotiations of identity

During the business course, the discourse of the designers reveals a constant negotiation of

identities in which a polyphony of multiple and self-contradicting voices manifest themselves. As reflected in the discourse, the designers' professional and personal identities synthesize into one shared identity which "makes work and identity a dynamic recursive process, each reflecting and shaping the other" (Mize Smith 2013: 132; Kirpal 2004). In this process, the design profession is framed as a personal and professional vocation and designers as having quasi-religious commitments as concerns art, aesthetics and design. Also, this quasi-religious discourse may implicitly serve to establish a framework of supreme leadership and divine authority (Fairhurst 2011; Alvesson 2011).

However, a growing intellectual realization of the necessity of incorporating a business identity into the synergized version of personal and professional identity sporadically manifests itself in the group of designers. As explicated in 5.1 on experiences of physical force, the discourse reveals that the negotiation process of potentially incorporating a business identity is experienced as painful by many of the designers. "I need to be forced"; "I need to have my backside kicked"; "I realize the problem but I don't want to embrace a business identity".

The discursive and metaphorical choices reflected in the findings illustrate how the designers used negative framing in order to uphold their personal and professional identities as professional designers in order to morally justify their resistance towards incorporating a business identity. The findings illustrate how the strategy of negative framing is used to highlight certain "aspects of perceived reality […] in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman 1993: 55). Through metaphors and suggestive framing of accountants and financial advisors as "spread sheets in suits" and " personified versions of Excel" and of sales representatives as "smarmy second hand car dealers" and "hard-core business guys", the designers established negative framing of the business world (Fairhurst 2011; Holmgreen 2012; Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

The discursive choices and the dominant negative frames affect how business activities and entrepreneurship are perceived and categorized by the designers participating in the course. The framing of a specific situation or act determines positive or negative categorization and prevents other interpretations of a situation as "frames can become so taken for granted that it is hard for people to 'see' or 'do' differently" (Whittle et al. 2015: 378). The data gathered over eight weeks demonstrate that individual and professional identities are continually negotiated and re-negotiated according to time and context. The business world is framed and reframed according to the dynamics of individual identity negotiations which potentially enable the individual to act in unfamiliar and unknown scenarios (Ancona 2012). Although designers' discourse overall demonstrates a growing intellectual understanding of the advantages of incorporating a business identity into a designer identity, this process is not of a linear nature moving from initial non-acceptance to a final state of acceptance. For most designers the negotiations of identity was of an oscillating nature moving back and forward between opposing points of view and opposing discourses of business reality and designer ideals.

The four clusters exemplify different elements of conflict in identity construction and identity negotiation. Taking as a starting point that the concept of identity is socially constructed and hence context dependent, a discussion of identity must take into account the dynamic aspects of the concept of identity. Identity is related to context as "different identities may be drawn on in various contexts, and each identity may embody particular ways of talking and interacting that are desired, necessary, or appropriate for the situation" (Mize Smith 2013: 130). A similar observation is made by Kirpal (2004) who points out that identity work involves an ongoing and dynamic interplay between individual identity and professional identity as reflected in the findings. This interplay constitutes a dynamic and recursive process in which the designers' individual and professional identities are constantly challenged by the demands of a business related identity as reflected in clusters one and three which illustrate experiences of force and enemy stereotypes. Other studies of

designers' identity and professional culture (Jensen 2005; Mishler 1999) support these observations and emphasise that the vocational nature of the design profession constitutes an essential part of designers' professional identity and their sense of being committed to aesthetics and design rather than business oriented concerns for production and market demands.

Designers' professional identity does not concern itself with calculations of return on investment. Instead, professional and personal identities synergize into a "search for meaning and identity […] in which the self [becomes] a project to be developed as it intertwine[s] with one's career" (Fairhurst 2011: 35). During the course on business training the designers experienced conflicting values and beliefs. The overarching theme in the search for identity concerned the individual struggle to provide a coherent and acceptable answer to the question "who am I?" (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003: 1168; Polkinghorne 1991). Professional identity and work-related activities play a major part in shaping and defining individuals' concept of self as work "provides a means of discovering and creating oneself" (Ciulla 2000: 51; Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003). Professional backgrounds, job functions, and who we work for constitute symbolic expressions and extensions of the self in both in organizational and business contexts as reflected in the data of the present study.

7. Discussion: Sensemaking and sensegiving

The following section discusses the findings in a theoretical framework of sensemaking and sensegiving to illustrate how designers' discourse reflects conflicting and competing sensemaking patterns in their changing narrative of self. In order to define personal and professional selves, individuals use narratives to make sense of their lives, actions and ambitions. Based on the individual's total sum of lived experiences at personal, professional, organizational and societal levels, narratives may be considered "the reflective product of looking back and making sense of stories constructed to make sense of life" (Flory & Iglesias 2010: 116-117).

In this ongoing process of sensemaking, narratives may be "viewed as the cognitive framework that guides an individual in making sense of experiences" (Hawkins & Saleem 2012: 208). These sensemaking efforts constitute a frame for self-understanding, self-justification and personal brand based on experiences of who I am and what I stand for (Hatch & Schultz 2000). As reflected in the designers' discourse and in their experiences of being torn between dream and reality, i.e. the obligation of staying true to core designer values in a world of harsh economic reality, personal and professional selves are under moral and economic pressure. The designers' need for reorientation takes the form of both retrospective and prospective sensemaking and a storytelling of self which is closely related to modes of self-legitimation and moral self-justification in order to defend the individual's present and future actions and points of view (Maclean et al. 2012).

Individuals can and do have contradictory narratives in which values and identity clash. The narratives and sensemaking patterns of organizations and professions may conflict with individual narratives of self and individual sensemaking patterns (Philips 2012; Hawkins & Saleem 2012; Norlyk 2014). The discourse of the designers provides evidence of conflicting and competing sensemaking patterns reflected in statements such as "I realize the problem but I don't want to embrace a business identity"; "Am I a part of this?"; "Can I do it?"; "After all, you need to have a core"; "I *am* my designs".

However, towards the end of the course, data indicate that some designers demonstrate a budding acceptance of potentially incorporating elements of a business identity: "I don't want to be considered a naïve designer"; "I want to be in control"; "I once took part in a two days' course on entrepreneurship and financing arranged by [an internationally recognized] bank".

Narratives, framing devices and discursive choices enable individuals to create sensemaking structures in a context characterized by mutually exclusive or conflicting identities as illustrated in

the data. Weick (1995: 4) defines sensemaking as "the making of sense" and argues that sensemaking is a cognitive means that enables individuals to understand, predict and adapt to changes. A similar point, stressing the dynamic and inherent uncertainty related to sensemaking, is made by Ancona, who argues that sensemaking is an ongoing process which concerns individuals' structuring of the unknown in order to come up with "a plausible understanding – a map – of a shifting world" (Ancona 2012: 6).

While sensemaking concerns "the ability to make sense", sensegiving concerns "the ability to shape the way others make sense" (Whittle et al. 2015: 378) involving the dissemination of approved frames of meanings (Fiss & Zajac 2006). In an organizational context, sensegiving refers to management's articulation of an abstract, strategic vision in order "to promote general organizational acceptance and to facilitate a preferred vision of organizational reality and identity" (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991: 442). In the present context of encouraging designers to think in a business framework, designers' personal and professional sensemaking processes challenge the opposing sensegiving narrative of business and entrepreneurship communicated in the framework of the training course.

8. Concluding remarks: business, passion and professional identity

In the creative professions, passion and commitment to a higher cause constitute key elements of both individual and professional identity (Mishler 1999). Although the concept of passion is a recognized entrepreneurial driver, passion also constitutes an important part of the identity of elite professionals outside a business framework such as e.g. musicians, athletes, dramatic artists (Murnieks et al. 2014). The experience of passion or – equally important – the lack of passion that designers or entrepreneurs experienced when engaged in a business framework may "affect the degree of importance that individual places on enacting the entrepreneurial identity in the future" (Murnieks et al. 2014: 1600).

The lack of passion when having to operate in a business context is clearly reflected in designers' experiences of physical force, identity conflicts and of being stuck in encumbering boxes in the alien framework of business. In the present study the ongoing negotiations between a designer identity and a business identity did not take the form of a logical, linear sequence in which design identity was gradually replaced by a business identity as the course developed. Rather the negotiation of opposing identities took the shape of a recursive process oscillating between identities.

Designers' professional discourse and professional identity center stage the obligation to stay true to personal and professional ideals of design and aesthetics. Both discourse and identity contain vocational elements and highlight immaterial and moral values such as aesthetic authenticity and the importance of making a difference through unique design as reflected in the discourse describing the designers' experiences of the business world. Personal and professional ambition is related to the recognition of one's name, style and artistic integrity rather than the achievement of commercial success. Consequently, collaborating with the business world or setting up as an entrepreneur involves a series of compromises related to ideals of uniqueness in art and design.

The meeting of business and design involves incorporating changing market demands and a series of business related concerns for market, production and standardization, return on investment, taxation systems as well as banking and finance. As reflected in the designers' discourse and negative framing of these activities, synergizing or incorporating a business identity into a design identity proved a difficult task as many designers experienced these professional identities as potentially incompatible.

The present study contributes to the fields of professional discourse and professional identity by explicating how a group of designers experienced processes of transition and conflicts of identity

when taking part in a course on business and entrepreneurship. Although further research is obviously needed, the present study indicates that, as concerns professional designers, the incorporation of business thinking into the creative professions meets challenges related to professional identity and patterns of sensemaking and sensegiving.

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Strategy and organizational culture – Conceptualizing the interplay of key concepts in communication

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Abstract: Strategy and organizational culture have had a long and varied history in communication research. Different definitions go hand in hand at several levels to analyze their nature and impact. The cultural roots of organizations and the need for flexible strategic communication raise the question: *Do the generic similarities between strategy and organizational culture impact organizational communication, and if so, how can this be conceptualized?* Both strategy and organizational culture are embedded in dynamic environments and cope with complexity. They seem to be two sides of the same coin – combining stability from the past and flexibility for the future. But strategies cannot be implemented without culture being considered. Therefore, this article contains three main parts. First, it will use a literature review to discuss the resemblance between definitions of strategy and organizational culture as patterns that evolve over time. Second, the generic similarities will be applied to the CCO (communication constitutes organizations) principle, whereby strategy and culture are both an outcome of the *four flows of communication* and influence the constitution of an organization as well as its identity. Finally, this article will explain how organizational culture goes hand in hand with strategic communication and how this yields insights for science and practice. In short, this research will merge two important concepts of organizational communication. Finally, and as an essence of the interplay of strategies and organizational culture, the *four flows of communication* and five core categories will provide access to research and a way of advising companies in terms of organizational communication.

Keywords: Organizational culture, strategy, organizational communication, change, strategic communication.

1. Introduction

Organizational culture is rooted in history and has been considered in a variety of ways (Schein 2010). Moreover, strategy has its origin in an age long before Christ (Evered 1983: 58-59). Both are important concepts in today's business world, as well as within the fields of organizational theories and communication science. Therefore, organizational communication is not conceivable without strategic communication in the organization's day-to-day business and separate from the cultural roots of the organization itself. Along this line, Allaire & Firsirotu (1984) pointed out that organizations are social systems, comprised of processes, norms, and structures. This process of socialization takes place within organizational culture, where culture means a collection of social conventions (Miller 1995; Ventresca & Kaghan 2008; Schein 2010). In addition, strategies are described as a process that surrounds interactions and as a channel routing organizational members toward their objectives (Gray 1999a). Thus, if we look at organizations as social phenomena, they are "constituted by interactions, language patterns, sensemaking, and symbolic processes" (Putnam & Nicotera 2009: ix). This process of constitution is strongly connected with an organization's prevailing culture and applied strategy. The development of strategies affects organizational culture because of the overarching presence of culture. "Culture is the context that 'surrounds' and the context that 'weaves together'." (Gray 1999b: 59)

An example from history might help to underline the need for a conceptualization of the interplay of strategy and organizational culture. Looking at a map of Alexander the Great's conquered territory shows more than geography. His campaign from Greece to India illustrates that conquering different political and cultural areas also depicts a pattern of a strategic maneuver. The use of a strategy cannot neglect the specific cultural background of the place. Consequently, the

map may also look like a specific pattern of both a (military) strategy and a cultural terrain. The strategy itself has to take into account that the opponents belong to different cultures and subcultures, so different styles of campaign must be applied. This example makes it clear that there is an obvious connection between strategy and culture. While strategy has its roots in military practice and developed from a function toward a process (Evered 1983; Mintzberg & Quinn 1991), culture has its origin in the field of botany, where culture means "to cultivate something." (Cheney et al. 2004: 76) Both concepts are strongly interwoven within business and organizational communication today. Now the cultural roots of organizations come up against the need for flexible strategic communication within a turbulent environment, which is made up of complexity, globalization, and different stakeholders (Waters 2001; Nothhaft & Wehmeier 2007). All this requires a thorough understanding of the above-mentioned interplay. Hence, stability meets flexibility: the past has to deal with the future, and routines guard against ongoing uncertainty. Therefore, this article will try to examine to what extent strategy and organizational culture are similar and why it is important to consider one together with the other.

The following comparison of both definitions will provide an understanding of each concept. Based on this, this article asks: *Do the generic similarities between strategy and organizational culture impact organizational communication, and if so, how can this be conceptualized?* In detail, this overarching research question will be threefold:

1. What are the generic similarities between strategy and organizational culture?
2. How do the concepts influence each another?
3. What consequences arise from the interplay of the concepts for organizational communication?

This article uses the CCO principle to conceptualize the generic similarities between strategy and organizational culture. Furthermore, the point of view that *communication constitutes organizations,* applied as a basic framework, allows a profound comparison and discussion of the interplay between strategy and organizational culture based on the *four flows of communication* (McPhee & Zaug 2000). Lastly, this research aims at yielding insights for further considerations.

2. Definitions

2.1. Cultural concepts and understanding

"Culture is both a 'here and now' dynamic phenomenon and a coercive background structure that influences us in multiple ways." (Schein 2010: 3) Cultural concepts can be distinguished through two general concepts. They define culture as an institution of society and as a system of meanings. The former version sees culture as an overarching concept. It produces interactions, enables predictions, and gives stability for organizational activities. In this sense, culture can be seen as an element of management insofar as it is organized and controlled by leadership (Cheney et al. 2004; Schein 2010). Assuming culture as an institution of society allows an organization to be defined as something that *has* a culture (Miller 1995). On the other hand, culture as a system of meanings requires a more dynamic understanding, which includes persons or groups interacting within several subcultures. From this sociological and anthropological perspective (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984), culture is seen as a guideline that accepts inconsistencies and change. "Based on this wider interpretation, culture is a system of meaning that guides the construction of reality in a social community." (Cheney et al. 2004: 76) This interpretative view defines culture as a mosaic or pattern of opinions and subcultures, which evolves over time (Cheney et al. 2004; Schein 2010). Therefore, an organization *is* culture (Smircich 1983; Miller 1995).

In a more detailed look, Smircich (1983: 344) described culture "as social or normative glue that holds an organization together." Furthermore, Schein (2010: 18) established culture as a learned

and shared pattern of basic assumptions, values, behaviors, and artifacts, which consists of interactions and is held by a social group. In line with this, these patterns can be described as emerging through the constitution of interactions through languages, contexts, identities, and relationships. Within these interactions, culture can survive over time and space (Alvesson 1996: 459, 2002: 177), and is manifested in myths, rituals, stories, legends, and language (Smircich 1983: 344). Thus, culture is socially created through interactions of organizational actors (Miller 1995). The above-mentioned thoughts tend toward an interpretative understanding of culture, which is used for further discussion and is part of the understanding of organizations as being socially constructed. The article finishes by defining culture as a system of meanings, according to Cheney et al. (2004):

> Another reason to question the idea of using culture as a management tool is that culture develops through numerous kinds of social interactions. Organizational cultures typically have been developing over many years; they are embodied in different employees; they are reproduced daily through rituals and ceremonies; and they are often influenced by developments in the general culture of society or by conditions within a specific industry. (Cheney et al. 2004: 92-93)

Consequently, *culture can be conceptualized as a pattern that evolves and endures over time and space through social interactions*. Because of the overarching nature of organizational culture, strategies cannot be implemented without recognizing the cultural rules of the company.

2.2. Strategy discourse

"Strategy is a pattern, that is, consistency in behavior over time." (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 9) The term strategy developed from the Greek word *strategos* – which means a commanding general of an army – to become a concept of business management. While strategy referred in the age of Alexander the Great "to the skill of employing forces to overcome opposition and to create a unified system of global governance" (Evered 1983: 58-59), strategic planning approaches have in common that they are goal-focused, rationalized, and articulated guides to actions (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 13). Nevertheless, while strategies are strongly interwoven with management science and practice, it is still unclear what a strategy is and for which use strategies should be applied. Mintzberg & Quinn (1991: 3) pointed out that it is impossible to define strategy by using one correct answer. But even if there are different meanings of the key features, such as objectives, goals, and programs in the field (Mintzberg & Quinn 1991: 3), "the essence [of strategy] lies in the realm of the consequences of actions for future outcomes" (Gray 1999a: 18). Following Evered (1983), the development and understanding of strategy can be described generally in three parts:

> Strategy, in the *corporate management* field, is seen as a process for generating viable directions that lead to satisfactory performance in the market place, given a variety of legal constraints and the existence of competitors. … In the *military field*, strategy is viewed as the art of winning a protracted struggle against adversaries. … In the *futures research* field, strategy is viewed as a joint task of appreciating a complex of environmental changes and making core existential choices in situations of massive change. (Evered 1983: 70-71 [italics in original])

While many management scholars see strategy as a formal and a planning process, critical approaches discuss strategy in a more dynamical manner. Mintzberg (1993) questioned the formal planning school of strategy, because of the guiding principle "to be in hell is to drift; to be in heaven

is to steer" (Mintzberg 1993: 32) and by contradicting the predictability of the future. This tension exists also in the field of strategic communication. Strategic communication can be defined "as the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission" (Hallahan et al. 2007: 3). However, "underlining the self-dynamics in social systems goes hand in hand with skepticism toward linear planning and controllability" (Nothhaft & Wehmeier 2007: 160). Argenti et al. (2005: 83) illustrate the tension of strategic communication between being aligned with the overall formalized strategy and enhancing the position of the organization through ongoing modifications. Thereby, an overall formalized strategy is strongly connected with the culture of the companies. This raises another tension challenging organizational communication to be aligned with culture when implementing a new strategy – especially in crises and situations of organizational change.

Mintzberg (1978, 1991) and Mintzberg et al. (2005) compared five different views on strategy, called the *5 P's for strategy*, for a constructive orientation within the discussion of different definitions. The first is aligned with the planning school and sees strategy as an intended course of action (*plan*). This view ignores the influence of the environment, and assumes predictability. Thus, strategy brings the organization from here to there (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 9). Furthermore, and connected with the military field, strategy can be a specific maneuver to outwit and overcome an opponent (*ploy*). A more flexible understanding sees strategy as consistency in behavior, and views the term "strategy" as a result of interactions (*pattern*). Single interactions become a consistent pattern over time. This view allows openness concerning new learnings within a dynamic environment (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 24-25). While a framework is still given, the details can emerge based on the situation and occasion. Two other options assume that strategy locates a product in the environment (*position*) and strategy as a concept inside the organization (*perspective*).

> [A]s position, strategy looks down – to the 'x' that marks the spot where the product meets the customer, as well as out – to the external marketplace. As perspective, in contrast, strategy looks in – inside the organization, indeed inside the heads of the strategists, but also looks up – to the grand vision of the enterprise. (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 13-14)

Within these discussions of different meanings and uses of strategy, the concept of strategy develops from a plan toward strategy as a pattern (Mintzberg et al. 2005). The uncertainty and unpredictability of the future and the need for goal-orientated activities require that strategies "combine some degree of flexible learning with some degree of cerebral control" (Mintzberg 1994: 110). When this is translated to organizations, it can be assumed that organizations make plans for the future, *and* emerge through patterns of the past. Intended strategies exist beside emergent strategies and can become realized strategies over time. Unrealized strategies can also arise because of a changing environment (Mintzberg 1978).

"[E]ffective strategists mix these in ways that reflect the conditions at hand, notably the ability to predict as well as the need to react to unexpected events." (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 12) However, the article defines strategy *as a pattern that evolves over time through the interplay of intended and emergent strategies and interactions*.

Based on the fact that strategy is also a social process, which is rooted in culture (Mintzberg & Lampel 1999), the following discussion aims at revealing the generic similarities between strategy and culture. Not least because of the unambiguous essence of strategy, "[t]here is always a cultural dimension to strategical behavior." (Gray 1999a: 28) Moreover, and much the same as for strategies, organizational culture at every level is also a part of the organization as coming from the past and pointing to the future. Subsequently, the use of the *four flows of communication* (McPhee & Zaug 2000) as a basic framework clarifies the connection between both concepts, and elucidates

the importance of recognizing the interplay in the daily business of organizational communication.

3. The CCO principle as a basic framework

As the above-mentioned definitions highlight, strategy and culture are both rigid and dynamic. The emphasis lies in the emergence of interactions shaping the organization in an ongoing process. This can be combined with the CCO principle, according to which authors "avoid reifying the organization as a static entity, a fixed structure, or an omnipresent agent" (Putnam & Nicotera 2009: x). This perspective sees organizations as social phenomena constituted by interactions, language, patterns, sensemaking, and symbolic processes. Inside and outside organizational boundaries, members guide, act, and coordinate their activities through and in patterns of communication (Cooren & Taylor 1997; Fairhurst & Putnam 2004; Putnam & Nicotera 2009). Therefore, strategy and culture create a pattern, which becomes a structure over time and changes within this structure at the same time through interactions (Giddens 1984). Communication is the constitutive force of the past *and* the driver for future outcomes (McPhee & Zaug 2000, 2009). Thus, constitution can be defined as "a pattern or array of types of interaction [that] constitutes organizations insofar as they make organizations what they are, and insofar as basic features of the organization are implicated in the system of interaction" (McPhee & Zaug 2009: 27).

3.1. Introducing the four flows of communication

Taking a more detailed look, McPhee and Zaug (2000) assumed that the process of constitution appears through four different types of interactions – namely through *the four flows of communication*. The organization emerges through the interplay of the following communicative processes: membership negotiation (a), their self-structuring (b), activity coordination (c), and institutional positioning (d). First, organizations are made up of their members, which negotiate their roles, functions, and positions. "Organizations exist when they draw members in, and lead them to take part in and understand the interactional world unique to the organization." (McPhee & Zaug 2009: 35) Second, leaders steer and guide the organization by solving problems and deciding its future direction. "In short, organizations are the objects not merely of reflexive attention but of reflexive control and design – of self-structuring." (McPhee & Zaug 2009: 35) Third, common interactions proceed in a process of coordination of the daily business, which is a kind of "mutual adjustment" (Mintzberg 1979). Lastly, the organization cannot be considered divorced from a relationship with its environment, which means that the organization is embedded in a larger social system (McPhee & Zaug 2000). "The focal organization must actually connect with and induce return communication with important elements of its environment, and vice versa. It must establish or negotiate an image as a viable relational partner – customer, supplier, neighbor, for example." (McPhee & Zaug 2009: 40)

The CCO principle can be used to analyze the interdependence of strategy and culture, because both can be understood as patterns which evolve through communicative interactions. Thus, communicative activities are the *modus operandi* in which strategy and organizational culture evolve and endure over time and space. In this sense, they are outcomes of *the four flows of communication* (McPhee & Zaug 2000, 2009) and shape the past as well as the organizational future. Cultural roots, values, and norms influence the constitution as well as the identity of organizations within the strategic process. Based on an integrative and interactive understanding of both concepts (Hallahan et al. 2007; Schein 2010), the following analysis provides the CCO principle as a bridge between strategy and organizational culture. *The four flows of communication* are applied as a key concept to analyze the strategy-making process depending on culture through the lens of organizational communication.

3.2. Organizational change as a key situation

If these communication flows are applied, the similarities between strategy and organizational strategy can be analyzed. For a vivid description, the case of organizational change will be used as a key situation and example. Organizational change challenges the process of strategy-making and dealing with organizational culture simultaneously because "[t]he environment in which organizations operate is increasingly turbulent – changing rapidly and unpredictably with the globalization of markets and increased competition." (Cheney et al. 2004: 313) Therefore, change and change-related communication are valuable examples, since change implies consistency and flexibility at the same time (Cheney et al. 2004: 313-317).

> As some organizations have experienced, the more they emphasize permanence and stability, the harder it is for them to depart from established practices. … On the other hand, the more an organization strives for continuous change, the more difficult it can be for members to feel a sense of stability, especially when the changes do not follow logically or organically from established missions and strategic plans. (Cheney et al. 2004: 317)

Alvesson & Sveningsson (2008) describe organizational change as a complex process. Following their argument, organizational change is strongly interwoven with an alteration in *time*. Moreover, they claim the notion of environmental change as a presupposition for organizations who go through a change process (*institutional positioning*). This ends up as a *need* to change. The environment shapes the *context* for organizational change, which can arise at different *levels*. A change solely of processes or activities at the micro level might also be conceivable, as well as an alteration in society at the macro level. Additionally, the authors highlight that the *actors* within change situations play a key role in the progress of change (*membership negotiation + activity coordination*). Finally, studying organizational change requires selecting a *theoretical perspective* (Alvesson & Sveningsson 2008: 4-7). Change is an organizational phenomenon often stimulated by management (*self-structuring*). Thus, change can be understood as:

> a … process of social construction in which new realities are created, … sustained and modified in the process of communication. Producing intentional change, then, is a matter of deliberately bringing into existence, through communication, a new reality or set of social structures. (Ford & Ford 1995: 542)

Aligned with the CCO principle, this perspective implies that change "occurs in a context of human social interactions, which constitute and are constituted by communication" (Ford & Ford 1995: 542), and that communication is the *context* in and the central means by which change occurs (Cheney et al. 2004: 232). When summarizing this, change can also be conceptualized as a product of social interactions and as the result of communicative activities. Thus, the situation of change will be an example for analyzing the impact of the generic similarities between strategy and organizational culture for organizational communication.

3.3. Analyzing the interplay between strategy and culture

Strategy and culture are both open to different members, functions, and positions, and able to create an identity for organizational members and potential applicants. They can be connected to membership negotiation (a) insofar as strategies depend on different members and on the collaboration of different departments concerning the process of strategy development and implementation (Hallahan et al. 2007), and insofar as organizational culture includes the struggle

and negotiation between old and new members with different subcultures (Schein 2010). *Openness* and *identity* are the two categories connecting the internal organization with its external environment. If a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) grows and transforms into a large company, it will implement new structures and departments, employ more and new personnel and struggle with a new organizational climate. At some point in time, a person or even a department who is solely responsible for communication will be employed (Zerfass et al. 2015). Consequently, the strategy must consider the tension between the old and new members as well as the struggle between organizational culture and new subcultures. In such a situation, the challenge for organizational communication within the SME is reaching an understanding between the owner and the newly employed communicator (Fischbach & Mack 2008: 170). At the same time, communication will be the *modus operandi* including the actors of change, transferring information, and negotiating between old and new conditions.

Concerning the process of self-structuring (b), the organization has to communicate in a *consistent* manner (Mintzberg et al. 2005) and with a high level of *awareness* toward the change inside the organization (Schein 2010). Organizational leaders have to decide the communication strategy, as well as playing a core role when organizations create and apply culture. In this sense, to a certain degree strategists reflect the organizational culture at all times, not least because of the cultural instinct, which is manifested in their mind (Gray 1999b). The interdependence of leadership and culture illustrates that the above-mentioned flows of communication are connected and emerge through their interplay:

> (C)ulture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders. At the same time, with group maturity, culture comes to constrain, stabilize, and provide structure and meaning of the group members even to the point of ultimately specifying what kind of leadership will be accepted in the future. … These dynamic processes of culture creation and management are the essence of leadership and make you realize that leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin. (Schein 2010: 3)

In the case of change-related communication, self-structuring processes are mostly stimulated by management. When thinking of a growing SME, it might be conceivable that the growth itself implies a change in the management situation. Often large companies employ external managers when founders and owners are no longer able to lead the organization on their own (Hamer 1990: 39). Then the self-structuring force is stimulated by the new manager who is responsible for strategy implementation. This will be strongly interwoven with the flow of membership negotiation, where leaders have to deal with the tension of new strategy and the established organizational culture when making decisions about the future and recognizing the past. Their awareness concerning the internal change and their communication skills will be a key factor in the situation of organizational change and will be crucial for the acceptance of change.

The dualism of structure and process is evidenced also by the activity coordination (c) between the tension of *flexibility* and *consistency* (Giddens 1984). Strategic communication is structured and coordinated to combine solely communicative activities to a framework of corporate communications. Flexible communicative work patterns exist alongside overall formalized strategies (Mintzberg et al. 2005; Hallahan et al. 2007). This reveals once again the combination of strategy as a plan *and* as a pattern. Moreover, organizational culture is a result of the interaction of organizational members whose behavior is shaped by cultural rules (Cheney et al. 2004, Schein 2010). In addition to that, organizational culture is a guideline for the coordination of activities allowing change and adaptions. “Culture is not primarily ‘inside’ people’s heads, but somewhere ‘between’ the heads of a group of people where symbols and meanings are publicly expressed, e.g. in work group interactions, in board meetings but also in material objects.” (Alvesson 2002: 4)

Consequently, culture is implicit on the one hand, and on the other hand becomes explicit in organizational activities (Allaire & Firsirotu 1984: 199). Thus, organizational members have to be included in the process of change as part of the implementation of strategy (Mintzberg et al. 2005). The participation of organizational actors in planning *and* implementing a new course of action can enable a balance between organizational culture and new subcultures and the acknowledgement of the new leader. Furthermore, communication in the form of conversations enables the coordination of activities aligned with the culture and the formalized strategy. The challenge for organizational communication within a change process is to be consistent on the one hand, and on the other hand stay flexible because of the uncertainty und unpredictability of the future. This makes it clear that communication is not only an intended mode of social action, but also a complex phenomenon of interaction flows – evolving and struggling in the context of change (Ford & Ford 1995: 542). In reference to the example of a growing SME, the strategy concerning activity coordination should consider that all activities were mostly adjusted through direct communication and spontaneous conversations in smaller organizations. With an increasing size, the mode of adjustment changes insofar as project groups and meetings will increase while spontaneous conversations decrease (Zerfass et al. 2015). Thus, activity coordination must take into account the previous culture within new communicative strategies, e.g. through combining old and new instruments of internal communication.

According to Freeman et al. (2010) and Schneider (2002), the organization has to cope with its environment as well as with complexity and change by interacting with its stakeholders permanently and creating values for long-term relationships. This implies two key variables of the process of institutional positioning (d). While organizations have to be open toward their environment, they also need a strong identity to create trust and credibility. The process of strategy-making has to cope with the organizational identity and the influence of the environment. Furthermore, organizational culture lies between the external perceived image and the internal experienced identity. The art of this communicative flow seems to be the *openness* concerning the changing environment by preserving organization's *identity*. "(O)rganizational boundaries shift consistently depending on who is talking about it and strategy emerges through the daily practices of organizational members" (Holtzhausen & Zerfass 2013: 79). This means that communicative strategies have to cope with ongoing change and have to oscillate between the past and the future. When a company is going through change, it requires openness by monitoring the environment and staying flexible concerning the planned activities (Cheney et al. 2004: 317-318). Additionally, as it cares about the stakeholder relationship, the organization should not neglect its identity within the change process. For example, SMEs are characterized by strong contact management with regard to their business partners and by strong roots in local communities. If an SME is growing and transforms into a large enterprise over time, it will be necessary for it to preserve the identity of the organization. Direct and personal communication with stakeholders cannot change overnight to a range of new digital channels. Rather, organizational communication should adapt gradually to new communication instruments. All this highlights that the generic similarities of strategy and organizational culture are not without consequences for organizational communication. The above-mentioned similarities between both concepts are summarized in the Table 1.

The analysis of both concepts has shown that strategy is aligned with culture. Whereas strategies can be contrary to solely cultural norms, they cannot be acultural. Both are, in a specific way, learned and programmed from the past as well as being developing forces for future outcomes. In this sense, strategy is inescapably cultural (Gray 1999b). Strategic culture can be understood as a guide to strategic actions, when actions are defined as social interactions constituting patterns of enduring assumptions about strategic matters (Gray 1999b; Putnam & Nicotera 2009). While communication is "the very medium within which change occurs" (Ford & Ford 1995: 542), the oscillation between formalized strategies and organizational culture is an ongoing challenge for

companies. Culture as a pattern of assumptions arises in the context of communication and is the framework in which strategy implementation occurs. Those patterns warrant cultural discussions of strategic communication (Gray 1999b).

Table 1: The common ground of strategy and organizational culture

Similarities	References
No single definition	Mintzberg & Quinn 1991 Schein 2010
Enduring over time and space Emerging from the past and indicating the future	Alvesson 1996 Cheney et al. 2004 Mintzberg et al. 2005 Putnam & McPhee 2009
Linking micro (insight and internal) and macro (framework and external) perspectives	Taylor 1993 Cheney et al. 2004 Putnam & McPhee 2009 Schein 2010
Symbolic components	Smircich 1983 Alvesson 1996 Hallahan et al. 2007
Emerging through ongoing communicative interactions/trends in negotiation	Schneider 2002 McPhee & Zaug 2000, 2009 Schein 2010
Described as patterns of intended and unintended behavior	Smircich 1983 Mintzberg & Quinn 1991 Mintzberg et al. 2005 Schein 2010

4. The essence for organizational communication

Weick (1985) has already shown that strategy and culture are very similar. Moreover, he illustrated the difficulty of discriminating between the two concepts via a joke. He asked the readers of the article *The Significance of Corporate Culture* to fill in the word in the gaps in the following sentences:

> __evolves from inside the organization – not from its future environment.
> __is a deeply ingrained and continuing pattern of management behavior that gives direction to the organization – not a manipulable and controllable mechanism that can be easily changed from one year to the next.
> __is a nonrational concept stemming from the informal values, traditions, and norms of behavior held by the firm's managers and employees – not a rational, formal, logical, conscious, and predetermined thought process engaged in by top executives.
> __emerges out of the cumulative effect of many informed actions and decisions taken daily and over years by many employees – not a 'one-shot' statement developed exclusively by top management for distribution to the organization.
> (Weick 1985: 381-382)

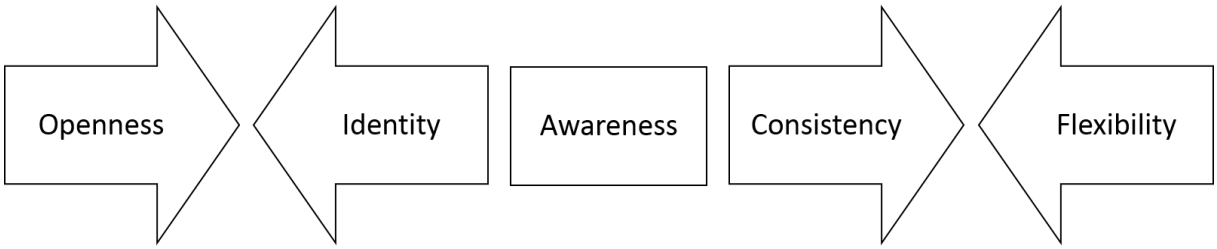
He solved the quiz with the answer: "Anybody who answered organizational culture failed the test.

The proper word is strategy." (Czarniawska 1992: 170)

Embedded in a turbulent environment and coping with flexibility and unpredictability, organizations have to rethink the connection between strategies and organizational culture for successful communication (Nothhaft & Wehmeier 2007; Holtzhausen & Zerfass 2013; Ebert 2014). Overarching cultural roots and the need for strategies within the business require a combined consideration of both organizational concepts (Gray 1999b). An analysis of strategy and organizational culture has revealed that the concepts are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, strategy and organizational culture were built on stability from the past as well as having to deal with the uncertainty of the future. While culture can be seen as stable and ongoing as a result of traditions and change, strategy is stable (plan) and dynamic (patterns) simultaneously.

As an outcome of the application of the CCO principle and the four flows framework, Figure 1 highlights five elements of the interplay of strategy and organizational culture:

Figure 1. The essence of the interplay between strategy and organizational culture



First, both concepts deal with change and with the relationship of an organization with the environment (*openness*). Furthermore, the *identity* of organizations is a key driver for successful communication, when the organization faces the formation and acknowledgment of its own structure. Identity can be used as a frame within rapidly changing environments. The *awareness* is needed to span boundaries (Grunig & Hunt 1984), because an organization has not only to be aware of the internal norms and values but also of the further development of the environment. Defining strategy and organizational culture as a pattern shows that both are outcomes of conformity in behavior. Moreover, strategy is aligned with culture and can never be acultural. "The strategy must not present mutually inconsistent goals and policies." (Mintzberg et al. 2005: 27) Therefore, *consistency* can be claimed to be the fourth element, but not only concerning behavior. Connected with *awareness*, it means that "the consistency … is important, not the intensity of attention" (Schein 2010: 237). Finally, *flexibility* is part of the concepts, because strategy and organizational culture have to cope with adaptions influenced by change and have to deal with new members. Seeing the organization as a flexible pattern of ongoing interactions challenges the formulation and implementation of strategic communication as well as the development and maintenance of organizational culture.

5. Conclusion

This article conceptualized the interplay between strategy and organizational culture. Based on the *four flows of communication* and by using the example of organizational change and change-related communication, it summarized the generic similarities between the concepts and revealed their impact on organizational communication. The analysis of the similarities based on each flow highlighted that organizational communication lies between the tension of openness and identity and the tension of consistency and flexibility. To be aware of these tensions seems to be one of the biggest challenges for organizations.

A successful interplay between both concepts of organizational communication is able to

create credibility, trust, and a strong stakeholder relationship (Cheney et al. 2004: 22; Putnam & Nicotera 2009: 6; Freeman et al. 2010). Moreover, the framework from McPhee & Zaug (2000, 2009) allow the interplay between strategy and organizational culture to be analyzed, e.g. in further research. The four flows can be used as categories within content analysis, in-depth interviews, or observations. This might be necessary for organizational communication, because strategic culture is the context in which communication emerges and will continue (Gray 1999b). At another level, communication is the medium within which the oscillation between strategy and organizational culture occurs. When practitioners understand that strategy and culture are strongly interwoven, and accept both sides of the coin (stability and flexibility) as a given, it can improve the acceptance of organizational members within a change process and the rate of reaction in dynamic environments, and overcome cultural boundaries within ongoing globalization.

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Literary art for reading's sake

A review of Anders Pettersson's *The Concept of Literary Application: Readers' Analogies from Text to Life*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2012, 250 pp., ISBN: 978-1-137-03541-7.

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1. The value of a literary text for a reader

Within the discussion of the value of literature, a continuing dialogue exists on its nature and status. When considered as an art form, literature is valued for its unique qualities independent of any cultural and individual expectations of use, as in *l'art pour l'art*. Yet at the same time, the form and content of literature is viewed as embodying certain characteristics that may evoke positively viewed cognitive and emotional outcomes for language learning and individual development. Both the aesthetic view and more instrumental views of literature maintain a type of supremacy of the literary text over actual acts of reading. In seeking an understanding of the value of literature, Anders Pettersson's *Concept of Literary Application* is significant as it attempts to shift direction in the discussion by theorizing actual experiences of reading and views of literary texts, while challenging many institutional beliefs about the status of literature and the nature of a literary response by an individual reader.

2. Applying literature to life

Individual readers, according to Pettersson, create value of a literary work by using a selected idea or theme of the text to shed new light on an element of their own personal experience or reality. They may also use aspects of their representation of the text to help them articulate an unexpressed thought or feeling. Thus the basis for the value of literature, as well as the literary experience itself, is found by applying a select part of a text to real life during or after acts of reading.

Pettersson claims that application is a genuine literary response to a text. Specifically, Pettersson defines application as an activity involving a reader 1) focusing on certain aspects of a text, and then 2) comparing and 3) evaluating elements of their text representation with their own sense of reality. Thus application stands in strict contrast to the cultural and institutional conception of the literary experience. Here a reader may discover the meaning of a text by reading the work as a self-contained aesthetic object in form and content, while relating its parts to a constructed whole. Furthermore, the text can be situated as an expression of a certain time and space, as well as representing a reality conceived of by an author without any obligation to external reality. Thus literary application is a challenge to the traditional hermeneutic norm, whereby the parts should help the reader construct or reconstruct a world unlike their own. Pettersson states that his overall aim is to provide an in-depth discussion of the concept of application as a legitimate, though often overlooked and undervalued, aspect of the literary experience.

That the reading experience of literature by some individuals may involve reading for ideas, values and knowledge based on personal experience and making comparisons with reality is not an unfamiliar phenomenon within literary studies. Literary critics and literary historians recognize this form of reading comprehension and interpretation, yet they find it superficial. Pettersson claims that application is actually a genuine aspect of literary practice, even fundamental to literary studies. The *Concept of Literary Application*, with its 12 chapters covering 250 pages with endnotes for each chapter, an elaborate biography and index, approaches this thesis by conveying several empirical studies of reading and attitudes towards literature, as well as presenting and critiquing many established views of literature and art within aesthetic philosophy and literary studies.

3. Cultural constructs and idiosyncratic responses

The book shows that the value of literature is not to be found in the work itself, but by the way readers engage with a text. Specifically, Pettersson suggests that the literary experience is motivated by four factors that make the reading of literature unique though not completely unrelated to the way persons experience the external world. Literary experience is characterized 1) by making abstract ideas more concrete, enabling persons to establish connections more easily between the text and experience, 2) by forming imagined realities of an author into meaningful patterns that might be ambiguous but deliberately designed, 3) by conveying ideas about life and reality that are more open to interpretation than non-fiction texts, and finally 4) by taking place in contexts of a reader's own choosing, enabling persons to ponder and even daydream about problems and issues. Thus literary application is shaped through different aspects of the text and the personal disposition of the reader. Theorizing this form of literary interaction is supported by some theoretical and empirical research on the reading of literature. Pettersson also conveys research from non-English speaking sources to support this view of literary experience.

Pettersson claims that the act of literary application is psychologically more realistic than conventional, aesthetic views of literature. In particular, Pettersson shows that the view of the literary text as an aesthetic object, which he refers to as the "delightful-object view" of art, emerges from different cultural constructs and metaphors, such as the conduit metaphor. In the book, there are many different institutional theories about literature that are presented and then critiqued according to Pettersson's "literary application" concept. Thereby the book provides an overview of different institutional beliefs about the cognitive and emotional outcomes from literature, such as transportation, empathy, simulation and identification. Importantly, the book implies that, in general, many institutional conventions may actually constrain us from understanding the true nature of a literary response.

As a form of reflection on his own construct, Pettersson writes in Chapter 11, titled "Questions of Norms and Values", that the assessment of a literary response by others is based on different preferential values and beliefs about interpretation. By returning to three protocols of good and poor examples of application, Pettersson suggests that so-called misunderstandings of a text are indeed possible. But they would not be viewed as a genuine literary response since they would transcend expected understandings of a text. But according to Pettersson, the cognitive and emotional outcomes of a literary experience are always idiosyncratic to a certain degree, reflecting what the reader finds significant, shaped by their own sense of reality. Accordingly, application challenges the supremacy of the literary text as a cultural artifact over personal experience.

4. A problematic development of a significant idea

While it is indeed significant and novel to shift focus from the nature of literature to the nature of reading, it should be noted that the development of the theory of literary application is empirically and theoretically limited. In particular, there is not much focus on readers' actual analogies from text to life, as the title suggests. Indeed with more than half of the book focused on critiquing institutional constructs, theorizing application is not developed thoroughly enough. At times, it is presented as an ontological fact, while remaining unclear how application distinguishes itself from actual acts of reading and interpretation.

Even though Pettersson conveys and compares an established psychological theory of reading with application, namely the "situation model", there seems to be a heavy burden placed on the reader to keep the activity of reading, interpretation and application separate. This may have to do with Pettersson's word choice and his use of concepts. Regarding word choice, sometimes Petersen writes that application is an activity whereby readers compare the text to their own life and reality, yet according to his own construct, it is not the text that is compared but the reader's constructed representation based on a reading strategy that involves the reader drawing on their own experience.

This way of presenting the "situation model" is also problematic. The situation model is a form of domain knowledge of various entities and activities, including abstract knowledge of texts used to create a representation of a text during reading (Scardamalia & Bereiter 1991). A well-developed situation model would constrain readers' automatic processing involving their own contemporary sense of reality (Peskin 1998). Pettersson simply dismisses this central idea by providing his own reading of a literary text as an illustration of application. For instance, he hypothesizes a reader without experiential knowledge of "tents" to understand a story about camping. Yet instead of examining how the situation model may actually guide the construction of a text representation and avoid early closure, even when readers are confronted with a text beyond their own experience of camping, he insists on the idea that analogy between world and acts of reading are necessary for understanding a text. Thus he says, "in the building of a situation model, the reader draws on the world to understand the text".

Hence, his form of argumentation and rhetorical style makes it unclear whether analogy is involved in actual acts of reading comprehension or an activity first after the creation of a text representation. Despite his own claims of providing a detailed exploration of the mechanisms involved, especially in one of the final chapters, it is difficult to observe how Pettersson gets from introducing the concept and the few examples of reader analogies to stating quite emphatically at the end that "literature owes its existence to analogical thinking".

Furthermore, given that the cognitive process of analogy is so central an aspect of literary application, it is surprising, for theory development, that the juxtaposition of application and analogy is only presented in a couple of sections. In the beginning of the book, Pettersson points to Gadamer's use of application as a source of inspiration, while distancing himself from the philosopher's central premises about texts and reading. The connection is then noted in a footnote with references to the author's own work and with a reference to chapter 12, the last chapter, where Pettersson takes a final look at his concept as a general mechanism in human thinking. He states that application is comparable to "analogical thinking" as conceived by Keith Holyoak and Paul Thagard. Yet the connection is not further developed theoretically nor in relation to the limited empirical research referred to in the book. Recognizing the complexities involved in acts of reading and interpreting, the reader would benefit if the word "analogy" would have been included in the index as a cue to help reconstruct Pettersson's intentions.

There are other choices regarding organization and content for the book that make the development of the theory of application seem somewhat paradoxical. For instance, it seems illogical to rely on a very limited selection of empirical data of the reading experiences of untrained readers and their attitudes towards literature, while comparing and criticizing aesthetic and literary theories of literature typically used for enhancing language development and critical thinking in educational institutions. Yet Pettersson admits that his intentions are not to examine "literary-critical interpretation". His aim is to contribute to examining a theory of the reading of literature.

Given his aims, an alternative reason for this inconsistency may then be attributed to a poorly defined construct of a reader, based more on Pettersson's personal intuition than empirical studies (cf. Grabe & Stoller 2002). Other research on language development shows that individuals can be broadly categorized along a continuum of experienced and novice readers, with competencies such as reading for knowledge and information, like Pettersson's reader, to individuals reading for different views and multiple perspectives on reality to readers actually capable of constructing worldviews unlike their own experience (Fitzgerald 2000). Accordingly, Pettersson's reader is a novice reader, decontextualized from any institutional setting and beliefs about literature from schooling other than their own leisure time and pleasure.

Nevertheless, a focus on novice readers is still significant for examining and re-conceptualizing a theory of the reading of literature. But Pettersson seems to simplify his own position and the views of others on these issues. Rhetorically, this reveals itself, for instance, when

Pettersson criticizes the aesthetic views of John Gibson, calling the premises for his work superficial and misleading since they rely on everyday metaphors of meaning and texts, like the conduit metaphor. Yet what Pettersson's own discussion of the conduit metaphor lacks is that despite the semantic pathology embodied in our language about language, activities like learning to read or talking about a book are socially dependent on the conduit metaphor as a cultural structure for these types of activities to take place. Even Pettersson cannot avoid the conduit metaphor in its various forms. When talking about reading, he refers to "objective meaning" in language and then the "subjective" application of it to life and reality.

Another problematic rhetorical strategy for theory development concerns Pettersson's form of argumentation. Namely, he suggests that a critical stance exists towards application as he conceives it. For instance, he writes, "Gibson explicitly questions the aesthetic relevance of application" and later on he says, "Many thinkers about literature are unwilling to accept application as one of the adequate responses to literary art". Yet his presentation of the literature does not refer to any studies that directly take issue with his concept in a dialectical fashion expected of academic discourse. Despite the tremendous overview of literary theory and constructs the book contains, Pettersson seems regrettably to use his knowledge to attack established traditions, especially the textual supremacy view and related issues, by constructing a critical position of literary application that does not explicitly exist.

5. The individual and cultural value of a literary response to texts

As a reader, and especially aware of my social role as reviewer, I have, in the spirit of John Dewey, attempted to "willingly suspend disbelief", in order to be as open-minded as possible in order to engage with a text by another writer with different premises. In this sense, I have attempted to read the book according to an institutional conception of a literary text, namely that texts have the potential to be read as representing a world unlike one's own. Thus I was eager to play the game "hermeneutically" without superimposing my own ideas and beliefs. Yet according to the concept of literary application, this form of reading is psychologically unrealistic. Some readers may be schooled to read this way, but most people do not.

As mentioned, psychological and educational research on reading comprehension demonstrates that some individual persons may read for information and knowledge as it relates to their contemporary social and material reality, while others may actually be able to construct or reconstruct a worldview unlike their own. This book can be read in a similar fashion. It can be read for its many parts, such as references, topics, research findings and theory, as information that may or may not have significance for a reader. Yet the book can also be read for how these parts add up to a whole. Regarding the latter strategy, the underlying worldview unfortunately resembles the negative critique and negative case building strategy of developing an idea present within academics (Stjernfelt & Thomsen 2005).

Despite this negative approach to the common pursuit of understanding the value of literature, the focus on the reading experience of literature remains a significant idea to explore towards the goal of understanding the value of reading literature for its own sake, but also for shedding new light on the institutional practice of using literary texts to enhance language acquisition and learning, as well as for individual knowledge growth (Langer 1990) and cultural development within society (Miall & Kuiken 1999).

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