

Introduction to Special Issue: Identity

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Collins English Dictionary (Harper-Collins, 1995) advises in the first two definitions that an identity is:

1. the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no other person or thing.
2. the individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized.

and yet, quite unsurprisingly, the articles presented in this issue cover the unifying and collectively shared aspects of organizational identities, rather than the distinguishing ones. To be different apparently means just to be similar to somebody else, and T-shirts with a pun "I am a non-conformist, like all my friends" are a popular acknowledgement of this paradox. If we agree that an identity may be perceived as "the capacity to keep a particular narrative going" (Giddens, 1991: 54), it is clear that the study of prevailing, common stories and of the dominant, shared self-perceptions is of utter importance for organizational studies (Boje, 2001).

This special number of *Tamara* presents papers on identity in an organizational context. The issue of identity is approached from a wide range of angles. The articles cover topics varying from occupational and professional identities to general conceptual problems in identity theory in critical organization studies; from decision-making in identity construction to companies' identities, as well as describing relations between the micro and macro-level identities.

Also the methods and theories used in the collected volume are truly diverse. Although they are usually in qualitative, postmodern, and/or critical flavor (provided on popular demand of TAMARA's audience), they

still differ quite significantly. From ethnographic fiction, through narrativity, actor vs. context analysis, unstructured interviews, sensemaking, to storytelling and wider discourse studies, the presented articles include a plethora of styles and takes on the subject.

This plurality of perspectives is probably a result of a more general ambiguity related to the topic in our discipline. For the impenitent postmodernists, like some of us, it is definitely a good sign, as it proves that the subject is alive, wild, and still at large.

The articles:

Kenneth N. Ehrensals takes a look at our own community, in an ethnographical analysis of the AACSB accreditation process in terms of faculty members' self-image transformation.

Ann R. Pedersen delves into the subject of local enactment and creation of occupational identity among female health care professionals.

Jason S. LeCoure, and Albert J. Mills use Bakhtinian theory to bring an actor back into the focus of identity analysis, and confront their approach with Foucauldian perspective on self and dialogue.

Dariusz Jemielniak studies interviews with programmers to conclude that their occupational identity is constructed not only through the image of an engineer, but also of an artist.

Anthony R. Yue, and Albert J. Mills make a theoretical proposal of existential sense-making approach to organization studies of identities and ethical behavior.

Ann R. Pedersen and Jesper Strandgaard Pedersen analyzes film company's interactions with the media, to describe the relational aspects of organizational identity storytelling.

Cathy Bréda, Miguel Delattre, and Rodolphe Ocler link the individual discursive practices with the brand and corporate identity and meta-stories' creation.

It is not surprising that TAMARA addresses these topics: with so many organizations,

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occupations and individual actors having identity issues, a journal should be no worse.

Boje, D. M. (2001) *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*, London - Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

High-Tech Environments" (2008), and a forthcoming "Handbook of Research on Knowledge-Intensive Organizations". His research focuses on knowledge-intensive workplace and professions, which he analyzes by the use of qualitative methods.

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