Contesting the Real World of Budgets: The Polyphony of Organizational Socialization

Jochen Hoffmann[1]

Abstract

Organizational socialization research has been criticized for being too focused on socialization as an adaptation process. Furthermore, critics contend that socialization approaches tend to be micro-biased; they lose sight of broader societal implications. This study tackles both critiques by combining an identity-based understanding of socialization with the communicative concept of the polyphonic organization. It is not only individuals who engage in multiple identity work; business organizations also do so when exposed to contextual voices at the macro-level of society. Qualitative interviews and focus groups with corporate communication professionals, alumni, and students reveal that there are multiple voices shaping organizational socialization. However, one societal reference has proved to be hegemonic, namely the instrumental reasoning of the economic system: newcomers are expected to adapt to the 'real world' of 'budgets.'

Keywords

Organizational identification, organizational socialization, polyphony.

> Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it (Jobs, 2005).

This was Steve Jobs' advice to Stanford graduates. He expresses the strong belief that "matters of the heart" should also be important in the workplace. Jobs' conviction anticipates perceptions of millennials which question a rationalized and regulated understanding of "real jobs" after graduation. Meanings of the colloquialism "real job" have been investigated by Clair (1996) and later in a replication study by O'Connor and Raile (2015). To a large degree, respondents from the 1996 study identify with a traditional "real job" understanding and have primarily materialistic benefit associations with it. The millennials questioned in 2015, however, distance themselves to a greater extent from sociocultural role expectations. They adhere to a more subjective approach and insist on their individual right to decide for themselves when a job is real and meaningful to them.

---

1   Aalborg University, http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4696-9250.

"Ultimately, I associate real job with real world which begins after college" (a respondent in O'Connor and Raile, 2015, p. 282). The potential tension between "matters of the heart" and a "real job" becomes salient during the transition period from higher education to the world 'out there.' Thus, it has also colored academic discourses on organizational socialization and resulted in an increasing interest in "vocational anticipatory socialization" – the talk about work before actually joining the workforce (Myers et al., 2011).

This study contributes to these perspectives by responding to two critiques: first, organizational socialization research is said to prioritize socialization as an adaptation process. Second, research is claimed often to be micro-biased and to lose sight of the societal dimension of organizational socialization. These issues can be tackled by looking at organizational socialization as a communication process both within and outside corporate boundaries that not only defines but also contests the "real world" of "real jobs" after graduation.

Instead of developing a new theory from scratch, the combination of hitherto unrelated academic discourses will enable a unique theoretical contribution: identity-based approaches to organizational socialization are embedded into the communicative concept of organizational polyphony. The idea that multiple voices constitute organizational identities turns socialization agents, such as companies and universities, into dynamic and contingent structures which may either prioritize or balance distinct societal expectations. This will allow macro-phenomena, such as the marketization of higher education, to be related to micro-biased organizational socialization approaches.

The empirical case study is based on qualitative interviews with professional communicators working for private companies in the Danish region of North Jutland, along with students and alumni of the *International Business Communication* program at Aalborg University. It will reveal how a predominant understanding of organizational socialization as adaptation insists on one (and only one) "real world" after graduation. Nonetheless, this study will also search for traces of organizational socialization as a polyphonic communication process challenging the corporate constitutions of a monophonic society. How are "real jobs" and the "real world" after graduation not only talked into existence but also contested?

Theoretical Foundation

Multiple Dualities of Identity Work in Organizational Socialization

The term organizational socialization, which today marks a well-established field of research, was nothing more than a sub-category in Jablin's (1982) seminal assimilation approach. Jablin's umbrella term "organizational assimilation" comprises both socialization and individualization processes. Socialization describes how new employees adapt to an organization, while individualization stands for the reverse: the employee as a creative individual influencing and changing the organization. However, by taking assimilation as the main term and defining it as "the process by which organizational members become a part of, or are absorbed into, the culture of the organization" (p. 256), Jablin prefigured a research field that systematically reifies organizational structures and privileging socialization over individualization (Turner, 1999). It mirrors what Wrong (1961) criticized over half a century ago as an "oversocialized conception of man in modern sociology." Meanwhile, organizational socialization replaced assimilation as

the preferred key term. Researchers lost sight of the dualism between socialization on the one hand and individualization on the other even more (see Kramer and Miller, 2013, for an overview). The focus was on the managerial question of how an effective adjustment of the individual to the organization may best be organized. Prescriptive and linear stage models (Jablin, 1987) were supposed to culminate in the same success message every time: socialization as adaptation completed.

Notwithstanding this, and in particular during the 1990s, research also explored the proactive behavior of newcomers (Morrison, 2002, for an overview). However, by conceptualizing them as "information seekers who take an active role in adjusting to their new environment" (Morrison, 1993, p. 173) the adaptation paradigm was left untouched. Their "pro-active adaptability" (Fugate et al., 2004, p. 14) was praised as a benchmark and empirical research noted a positive correlation between active information behavior and productive socialization into the organization (Bauer and Green, 1994). The organization was granted a higher ontological status as a pre-determined static context, and even the most 'proactive' newcomer was not allowed to challenge this status.

The managerial and psychological mainstream research on organizational socialization has not been free of criticism. Some of these critiques acknowledge the dominance of organizational structures vis-à-vis the individual, but they do not refer to the result as successful socialization, but instead criticize it as unobtrusive indoctrination or a form of concertive control (Papa et al., 1997). Other researchers reveal how organizational socialization can lead to social exclusion and discrimination, e.g. in the context of gender (Bullis and Stout, 2000). Most promising from a theoretical perspective are attempts to return the dualism of socialization vs. individualization to the agenda. Constitutive approaches (Brummans et al., 2014, for an overview) have succeeded in demonstrating links between organizational socialization and the identity work of individuals (Brown and Humphreys, 2006; Forward and Scheerhorn, 1996). It is argued that individuals entering the organization are much more than adaptive information seekers; they are creative and capable actants. Socialization turns into an ongoing communication on multiple and vulnerable membership roles, which takes place both within and outside corporate boundaries (Cheney 1991; Cheney and Christensen 2001). More recently, Scott and Myers (2010) developed this idea based on Giddens' (1984) structuration theory. The emancipatory identity work of individuals may contest and ultimately transform organizational identity regulation practices (Alvesson and Wilmott, 2002).

The communication perspective allows for the transformation of a static understanding of identity into dynamic processes of identifying or dis-identifying with social entities (Cheney et al., 2014). Employees develop different forms and a fluid degree of attachment to an organization. It is a fundamental decision about own positioning in terms of sameness and uniqueness. Individuals balance the need for inclusiveness with the need for distinctiveness (Elsbach and Bhattacharya, 2001). They perform a multiplicity of social roles, including different degrees of closeness and distancing. Role expectations frequently collide and issues such as finding an appropriate work-life balance are continuously renegotiated. Socialization thus becomes a never--ending process.

In consequence, a total identification with the employer organization can neither be reached nor be desirable. Instead, risks of overidentification need to be acknowledged. Overidentification happens e.g. when sect members surrender their individuality to follow a charismatic guru. In the light of linear stage models, such total alignment could be read with levity as a best practice

case illustrating the "perfect" outcome of the socialization process. However, overidentifying employees

> may lose the ability to question anything that the organization does. One needs some residual amount of identity outside of what is shared with the organization, such that one has an alternative perspective from which to evaluate organizational actions (Dukerich et al., 1998, p. 252).

In turn, a certain degree of disidentification is not a problem per se; it can be beneficial not only for individuals but also for organizations. Disidentification enables productive dissent and thus helps an organization to move forward, to learn, and to innovate. Such progress would not be possible if all employees already believed that they work for the perfect organization. In consequence, "schizo-identification" – which means concurrently identifying and disidentifying – could keep organizational socialization in a constructive balance: "Paradoxically, although it may be a pathology in many senses, schizo-identification is perhaps a precursor to such frequently functional behaviors as whistle-blowing and creative change" (p. 250).

In conclusion, an understanding of socialization as a dualistic communication process enabling varying degrees of identifying and disidentifying with an organization offers an instructive theoretical framework, which helps to overcome the one-sided adaptation paradigm of much organizational socialization research. Moreover, it helps to develop a theoretical response to another critique leveled at mainstream managerial research: the missing micro-macro link.

Constituting the Macro-Link:
The Polyphonic Communication of Organizations

Identity approaches in socialization research up-value the individual vis-à-vis the organization. They analyze the potential of "micro-emancipation" (Alvesson and Willmot, 2002, p. 619) in relation to the meso-level of organizational structures (e.g., Levine et al., 2001). However, the societal macro-context is still neglected in such a setting. As long ago as in 1996, Forward and Scheerhorn not only criticized the one-sided adaptation paradigm of socialization research; they argued that "issues pertaining to environmental change, organizational responses to change, and the effects of those responses on individual organizational members has also been neglected or misunderstood" (pp. 374–375). Similarly, Bullis (1993) claims that organizational socialization should be conceptualized more broadly as a "process through which individual--societal relationships are mediated" (p. 10). However, when summing up the state of research in 2010, Scott and Myers still identify a strong micro-bias: "Traditional models of socialization and assimilation illustrate microprocesses performed by individuals rather than the meso- and macro-level structures these actions reflect, sustain, and/or modify" (p. 86). Their proposed constitutive approach has the potential to fill this gap, but they primarily examine structuration processes taking place between individuals on the one hand and organizations on the other. Thus, the idea of multiple and dualistic identification processes needs to be taken to the next level, namely the macro-level. Socialization not only concerns the micro-meso-link – an individual entering an organization. It also deals with the meso-macro link – an organization relating its own multiple identity work to different spheres in society.

The theoretical idea of organizational polyphony (Schneider and Zerfass, 2018, for an overview) helps to incorporate the macro-link into an identity-based organizational socialization approach, despite the fact it is typically applied to individual voices 'within' organizations. The traditional benchmark of a unitary, consensual, and integrated organizational identity is set aside. Instead, organizations need to speak with multiple voices. The concept originates in music. In his seminal work, Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) applied polyphony to literature and it has since been used by a number of disciplines, including organization studies (Belova et al., 2008; Hazen, 1993; Sullivan et al., 2015) and organizational communication research (Christensen et al., 2015; Trittin and Schoeneborn, 2017). One-voice strategies in corporate communication are challenged in favor of multiple voices contributing to diversity and organizational innovation.

Trittin and Schoeneborn (2017) extended the concept to the macro-level by distinguishing between organizational and contextual voices. Organizational communication contributes to the formation of recognizable identities by filtering, focusing, or balancing contextual voices in society. Coexisting voices that are perceived to be legitimate even though they contradict each other constitute organizational paradoxes (Hoffmann, 2018). Newcomers are confronted with them and may respond with their own prioritization of contextual voices. Organizational socialization provides the space in which the society constituted by the organization meets and potentially clashes with the society constituted by the individual.

In particular, it is the radical constructivism of Niklas Luhmann's (1978/2018) social system theory that helps to bring the polyphony of society back into organizational research (Andersen, 2003; Bora, 2001; Grønbæk Pors, 2012; Roth, 2014). According to Luhmann, society constitutes itself through functional differentiation in social systems, such as the economic, political, or educational system. Traditionally, organizations are simply subordinated to one of these functional systems on the macro-level of society: "In this sense, a court is considered an organization of the legal system, a hospital an organization of the health system, and a school an organization of education" (Roth, 2014, p. 38). More recently, however, there has been an increasing interest in so-called hybrid organizations (Haigh et al., 2015), which simultaneously follow different institutional logics, or – to use the terminology of system theory – they communicate through different system codes. The university is a prime example of a multi-referential organization (Bora, 2001): its teaching constitutes education as a functional system, while its research refers to science. Overall, standard cases such as a company being driven by the logic of the economic system alone, are increasingly being called into question.

Organizations can instrumentalize a variety of societal references, while the expected code may still dominate. Andersen (2003) provides the example of a political organization using truth claims of science in order to legitimate a political goal. He refers to this as "parasitic codifications in polyphonic organizations" (p. 179). The primary societal code can also switch completely, and one may observe "a hospital ruled by economic budgets, a bank dominated by micro-politics, or a research lab basing their decisions on legal constraints first" (Roth, 2014, p. 49). Moreover, there might be no primary code at all, rendering the multiple identity work of organizations even more complex: "There is no longer a given relationship between type of organization and function system. An increasing number of organizations form many codes without a predefined hierarchy among them" (Andersen, 2003, p. 166).

These questions are highly relevant for organizational socialization research, because newcomers are no longer socialized 'into' something that has a fixed ontological status as a single-

-purpose entity which is subordinated to one, and only one, societal sphere (Hoffmann, 2011). Instead, the organizational structure is constituted as a multiplicity of moving targets, which mirrors the diversity of society. This diversity is constituted not least through socialization as individualization. The polyphony of society may or may not be expressed by newcomers who are either willing or unwilling to align with a seemingly predetermined organizational reality.

Adaptation or Polyphony: Constituting the Relationship between Higher Education and Business

Challenging the adaptation paradigm and bringing the macro-link back into socialization research enable a fresh theoretical look at the relationship between two key socializing institutions: universities and companies (Lair and Wieland, 2012). Managerial employability discourses (such as Fugate et al., 2004) expect from higher education institutions that they adapt to the expectations and needs of the economy. They must prove their usefulness for business; they are best understood as "training centers for industry" (Natale and Doran, 2012, p. 189) producing work--ready graduates. Within such a perspective, employability is the output of a corporate socialization process conducted by higher education on behalf of companies. Employers need only complete what the university has for the most part done for them beforehand. It is exactly such a serving role of the university as a socialization agent of the industry that is problematized by critical research (Hall, 2018, for an overview): students are indoctrinated, losing their critical thinking skills while being educated toward conformity. Adaptation to and overidentification with business expectations may result in a loss of identity; both on the level of the individual student and on the institutional level of the university. The latter is discussed as a pathological marketization of universities, the proposition being that academic institutions are being commercialized and teaching programs turned into commodities attracting students that approach higher education with a narcissistic consumer attitude (Nixon et al., 2016). Critiques of "academic capitalism" (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997) have increased over the years, culminating in the argument that business-like universities are losing their academic integrity (Natale and Doran, 2012).

Critical approaches towards the entrepreneurial university share "the general observation that economic instrumental rationalities increasingly rule social life" (Wenzlaff, 2019, p. 57; for a theoretical discussion, see Schecter, 2010). With regard to higher education, Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion (2009) apply Erich Fromm's (1976) distinction, claiming a mode of 'having' embedded in a materialistic consumer culture on the one hand, and a mode of 'being' constituting university studies as an intellectual self-development on the other. The "being mode" corresponds with the identity approach to organizational socialization: "to be" as a student is an end in itself, their motivation is intrinsic, and students experience a personal transformation. The "having mode" instead turns higher education into a commodity. A student acquires skills on an academic market. The purpose is "to have" a degree and find a job after graduating. Skills are not part of the identity; instead, they are a possession, and students are equipped with tools external to the self. The theoretical distinction between a "being mode" and "having mode" translates the potentially dominant instrumental rationality of the economic system on the macro-level of society into the micro-situation of a student leaving university behind and entering the business world.

Hence, the discourse on the marketization of universities can exemplify the societal implications of *vocational anticipatory socialization* processes on the individual level. The marketized

university is committed to the same adaptation paradigm as that promoted by managerial socialization research. The entrepreneurial university is a monophonic theoretical construct that listens only to the voice of the economy. However, there may also be other voices. When searching for polyphonic communication in a further education institution in the UK, Brown and Humphreys (2006) observed the entrepreneurial educational institution primarily as a self-legitimating construct of the senior management: "the college as a business that had to be managed appropriately (by them) in order to balance the books" (p. 248). The identity work of lecturers, however, was still based on the idea of education as an end in itself. Managerial perspectives on education remained under pressure, leading the college to be turned into a place of ongoing discursive struggles.

From an empirical standpoint, this paper extends Brown and Humphrey's perspective by including the perceptions of students, alumni, and employers. These contribute concurrently to the identity work of educational institutions and companies. The communication of respective perceptions may either strengthen or blur differing identities and interorganizational boundaries. Accordingly, society is also not conceptualized as a reified 'outside' world. Embedding the idea of polyphony into the system-theoretical concept of the multi-referential organization facilitates the search for organizational socialization as a competition between contradicting societies created by polyphonic organizational communication. Monophonic processes, meanwhile, discard all communicative boundaries for the sake of a seamless identity transition: the entrepreneurial university serves the business organization and the business organization constitutes the economic society. Such monophonic claims may or may not be hegemonic; they may or may not be contested. Accordingly, the empirical question that emerges is whether organizational socialization reinforces monophonic communication processes or whether it allows students, alumni, and employers to constitute polyphonic organizations and societies.

Research Design and Methods

The theoretical foundation of this paper combines three academic discourses that had hitherto remained largely unrelated. All three comprise both a dominant understanding and critical perspectives: (a) The adaptation paradigm of organizational socialization research is challenged by the individualization and identity perspective, (b) the understanding of companies committed exclusively to economic reasoning is challenged by the concept of organizational polyphony, (c) the managerial employability discourse is challenged by critical perspectives on the marketization of higher education. The empirical goal of this case study is to find out whether students, alumni, and senior professionals constitute 'their' organizations and 'their' society by following the dominant understandings or whether they also reflect on normative claims challenging those concepts: (a) individualization as an indispensable dimension of socialization, (b) the polyphony of organizations reflecting the polyphony of society, and (c) the independent voice of universities contributing to polyphonic socialization processes.

These normative claims are translated into empirical research questions. They are connected through the two core theoretical distinctions of this paper: *adaptation vs. individualization* and *monophony vs. polyphony*. The sequence of the research questions reflects the efforts invested in order to find an answer. Thus, the empirical analysis is organized analogously to the peeling of an onion and starts with the most accessible outer layer:

- *Employability* is an established communicative "boundary object" (Star and Griesemer, 1989) connecting academic with business discourses. This helped to retrieve from the data fairly explicit claims and opinions regarding the relationship between universities and business organizations as two key socialization agents. The question is to what degree students, alumni and senior professionals accept the adaptation paradigm as promoted by the managerial employability discourse: *(RQ1) How do expectations and experiences regarding organizational socialization constitute the relationship between universities and companies?*

- An understanding of organizational socialization as an individual and institutional adaptation to an economic rationale might be more or less salient in the data, but it does not yet tell us what this business world 'outside' the university actually looks like. Thus, it was more difficult to peel the second layer of the onion, i.e. to analyze perceived characteristics of the economic logic which might, in turn, be used to claim monophonic corporate identities: *(RQ2) How do expectations and experiences regarding organizational socialization constitute companies as economic organizations?*

- The most difficult part of the analysis was the identification of polyphonic socialization processes, which contest the monopoly claims of the business world. Providing empirical evidence for the normative claim that organizational socialization is more than adaptation and that the real world is more than doing business turned out to be the most challenging peeling of the final layer of the onion: *(RQ3) How do expectations and experiences regarding organizational socialization constitute companies as polyphonic organizations that listen to societal voices beyond economic rationality and thus provide spaces for socialization as individualization?*

The study was carried out in the North Jutland region of Denmark. It was part of a larger project that also looked at the unique characteristics of public relations practices in regional contexts (Hoffmann & Lingwall, 2020). The analysis for this paper is based on qualitative interviews with (1) communication heads of the largest companies in the region, (2) owners of communication agencies, and (3) alumni who graduated from Aalborg University. Furthermore, focus groups were conducted with (4) Bachelor students and (5) Master students from Aalborg University. The respondents are not identifiable; anonymity has been guaranteed.

We chose alumni and students from the International Business Communication (English stream) program at the Faculty of Humanities. On the one hand, communication professionals are often expected to take roles that span organizational boundaries. This could contribute to a higher degree of reflexivity, e.g. regarding the multi-referentiality of communication processes (Falkheimer and Heide, 2014). On the other hand, one could also argue that a program called International Business Communication signals a strong vocational focus and, as such, might primarily attract students who are more oriented towards a "having mode" rather than a "being mode." Molesworth, Nixon, and Scullion (2009) describe a type of student who tends "to reject deep reflection of vocational subjects, especially those rooted in consumer culture, such as public relations, marketing or advertising" (p. 284; see also Hoffmann, 2016). This makes communication students and professionals an interesting object for organizational socialization research. A total of 21 respondents contributed to our project:

1) *Senior professionals from companies Co1 – Co7*: we extracted 25 largest companies with headquarters in North Jutland from the global "Orbis" database. Annual financial turnover

was used as an indicator of company size. It ranged from DKK 161 million to 2.6 billion. We contacted the respective heads of communication by phone. Seven agreed to an interview, five companies informed us that they do not have anyone specifically in charge of communication, and 13 rejected our interview request.

2) *Agency owners Ag1 – Ag3:* we used a variety of search terms on the classified Danish Yellow Pages in order to identify communication agencies in North Jutland that were at least partly engaged in public relations for private enterprises. We checked their websites, identified five suitable agencies, and contacted the owners. Three of them agreed to an interview.

3) *Alumni Al1 – Al4:* we identified seven alumni a) who graduated from the Master program International Business Communication (English stream) between 2014 and 2016, b) whose Master thesis had been stored in the library project database (which is not the case only in a few cases subject to non-disclosure agreements), (c) who now – according to online sources like LinkedIn – work in a communication-related position, which is (d) in a private enterprise and (e) located in North Jutland. Four of the seven alumni agreed to an interview.

4) *Bachelor students Ba1 – Ba4:* we recruited Semester 1 students from the Bachelor program International Business Communication (English stream) at Aalborg University. We conducted a short survey during a class and selected 10 students from 42 responses (a) who are considering working for a company after graduation, (b) who are considering a career in public relations or corporate communication, (c) who have not yet gathered any practical experience in these fields, and (d) who would be willing to participate in a focus group. We contacted these ten students, four of whom were able to join a focus group.

5) *Master students Ma1 – Ma3:* we recruited Semester 3 students from the Master program International Business Communication (English stream) at Aalborg University. From a total of 27 students who completed a mandatory internship in fall 2017, we chose seven students who did an internship that included PR-related tasks. Three of them were able and willing to join a focus group.

The overall response rate was 43%. The average meeting length was 57 minutes. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in English. We chose focus groups with students over individual interviews in order to encourage peer discussions among them. This made the situation more comfortable for the students and avoided any potential association with an exam setting.

A pre-test with a communication practitioner from Aalborg University improved the interview guide. It included ten main questions for the individual interviews and nine main questions for the focus groups. The interview questions most relevant for this analysis concerned expectations with respect to academic programs and skills of graduates (most instructive for RQ1), experiences with newcomers or as newcomers during internships and the first weeks of regular work (most instructive for RQ2), as well as potential innovations new employees may have brought to a company (most instructive for RQ3).

The data analysis followed a code-based approach in the tradition of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The move from an open coding of *concepts* into theoretically instructive *categories* shifted and extended the original research focus. The first draft of the codebook primarily listed different types of skills potentially expected by employers, such as writing skills or social media skills. However, the researcher's attention was soon drawn to a very broad – and at this stage rather messy – *concept* which comprised 79 quotations. It had been called "transition"

and included statements referring somehow to onboarding expectations and experiences. The decision was taken to look at this *concept* from an organizational socialization perspective. The idea of including the theory of organizational polyphony came first and foremost from two additional inductively generated *concepts*: statements of respondents reflecting on work-place related "Ethics" and "Innovation." The chosen theoretical approaches guided a primarily deductive reorganization of these *concepts*. An iterative process of constant comparison produced three theoretically grounded *categories,* as mirrored by the three research questions introduced above. The following sections differentiate these categories and provide an in-depth interpretation of respective statements. The overall focus is on salient expectations and experiences, while concurrently remaining sensitive towards deviations from dominant understandings. Ultimately, we achieve a higher level of abstraction by relating the main *categories* to each other. Two specific in-vivo codes were instrumental in reaching this goal. The colloquialisms "real job", "real life", "real work" or "real world" and the perceived importance of "budgets" go to the core of how respondents talk 'their' organizations and 'their' society into existence.

Analysis

Universities and Companies: Socializing into the Real World (RQ1)

"I think there is this lack of – should we call it realism? How are things really going on in the real world?" (Co2:131) When reflecting on the challenges of organizational socialization, a majority of the respondents accept the distinction between higher education on the one hand and a "real job" (Co4:341), "real work" (Co1:225), a "real company" (Co7:70), the "real life" (Co2:149; Co3:117; Ma2:720; Ma3:587) and, most frequently, the "real world" on the other (Co2:131, 343, 347; Ag1:387; Al1:59; Al2:47; Al3:11,15,83,227; Al4:245; Ma1:278,696; Ma3:107). Work in companies is assigned a higher ontological status. "Unreal" life at university is perceived as a kind of comfort zone – a safe place without too much pressure or stress. Socialization needs to take care of graduates who are somewhat naïve, immature, and sometimes even scared about the unknown challenges of the real world (Co1; Co2; Co3; Ag1). Business, meanwhile, seems to be much more complex, demanding, and goal-oriented. Indeed, one employer argues that they had to 'un-learn' things from university at the beginning of the career (Co1). Accordingly, professional experience is perceived as one of the most important assets of job candidates: "We want experience in certain areas, and that is something which will always be a problem if you just have graduated. Where is the experience?" (Co6:115; see also Co1; Co2; Co4). One alumnus argues that they "heard that a thousand times" (Al3:223) when searching for a job. Applications failed because companies "would like someone with at least two or three years' experience" (Al4:26).

This affects the relationship of universities and companies as socialization agents. Some acknowledge a joint responsibility for the socialization process (Co1; Co3; Co5), whereas others insist on the work-readiness of graduates once they enter the company: "I don't have the time to be their educational master, unfortunately" (Ag2:96; see also Ag3). In addition, responsibility is delegated to the state: state-subsidized internships in companies are common in Denmark. Students do and would like to see even more (mandatory) internships, either during their studies or immediately after graduation (Ba4; Ma1; Ma3). Interns receive financial support from the state, and the government even pays companies in return for them offering internships.

These tendencies reveal a certain reluctance of companies to invest their own time and money in the socialization of young people. Not surprisingly, most respondents also argue in favor of a very applied nature of higher education. If universities are not "real life," they should at least try to simulate work-like situations as best they can (Co5). Teaching should follow an "extremely practical approach" (Al4:197; see also Ag1; Ag2; Ag3; Al2; Al4; Ba1; Ba2; Ba4; Ma1; Ma2). Problem definitions from industry are supposed to be the unquestioned starting point for brief hands-on student projects written in a 'how-to' style (Al4; Ma1; Ma2). Universities could organize more company visits for students (Al2: Ma2) and more practitioners should enter the classroom as teachers:

> I wish that the university was full of people like me. Professionals with plus twenty years' experience in the PR industry. They could teach them how it's done because that would make it so much easier for the students to find jobs afterwards (Ag1:116; see also Al1; Al2; Ba1; Ma1).

All these claims indicate that anticipatory socialization into the "real world" should already begin during university studies. Not only the graduates but also the university as an institution is supposed to adapt to the logic of business. Moleworth, Nixon, and Scullion (2009) point out how universities themselves utilize the notion of the "real world" outside the university and therefore contribute to their own identity loss: "The real world, it seems, is the commercial one and education that deals with abstraction, critical thought and theory, is placed outside of a student's real life" (p. 282).

The analysis thus far has shown that one societal sphere is claimed to be more real than anything else, namely: the world of business. Other socialization agents have no choice but to accept and adapt to its total ontological status. In this context, the marketization of higher education is deemed both necessary and beneficial. The next analytical step explores in more detail the nature of that logic as the goal of socialization processes: What is the real world of business actually about?

The Real World of Budgets: References to the Economic System (RQ2)

The tendency among both practitioners and students to position applied teaching as best practice *per se* reveals a key 'trait' of the real world: it is a pervasive instrumental reasoning that students must acknowledge during the socialization process. They need to learn 'how to' use tools and they need to accept that they themselves are tools. Employees must be useful; "real work" is carried out by commodified human resources whose purpose is to create value for the company (Co2; Co3; Co4; Ag3; Al4; Ma1; Ma2). In consequence, every initiative of a newcomer must be assessed on that basis: "Well, we would like to do Facebook, it's fun, we do Facebook. Why, why? … It's costing, it's not free. … We are spending somebody's money. We should get something back" (Co6:123–165). Similarly, Co1 explains why their global company does not engage in community relations:

> I heard some complaints from … local politicians, who came to visit us, who said that we did nothing for the local community in terms of sponsoring football clubs or whatever. You know, all these local patriotic kinds of things that apparently you need to do. But I do not

give a fuck. … I have had a lot of meetings with them, but we cannot even find somewhere to put our money, where we could look ourselves in the eye and say that this is a good investment in terms of sponsoring or marketing (Co1: 199).

Not surprisingly, respondents find it irritating when the socialization process becomes confused by contextual voices that may challenge the exclusive ontological status of the instrumental business logic:

I think that young people today compared to when I left university are in general more focused on values, ethical values, they want to work for a cause. They do not necessarily just want to work for a company, they want to work for a cause. … But in the private companies, we really look very much at the business skills. … So if you dream about … working with communication, then you have to be interested also in business and in selling and you have to have that feeling inside that this is really what I want to do, how do I build communication so that it supports the selling of the company that I want to go into (Co7:201–357).

Thus far, the quotes for the most part represent the corporate perspectives of employers and one wonders to what degree students and alumni articulate different perceptions. Many of them do not resist and simply accept the instrumental reasoning of the "real world." They prefer a communication program that is "more business-oriented" (Ba4:83; see also Ba1; Ba2; Ma1; Ma2; Ma3). One student criticized a recent class where the teacher talked a lot about racism and social identity issues: "I think it's interesting … but … what am I going to use this for?" (Ba2:669). Reflecting on racism may be interesting, but at the end of the day, it does not contribute to the employability of the student, because it cannot be assigned any instrumental value. Teaching content should be down to earth and provide practical business knowledge:

something as simple as knowing how a budget works … I think that's something that I've really missed because all businesses … have a budget: what can we do, what do we have, which resources and how to allocate resources? I think this is something that would be really good to learn (Ba1:664–668).

Several respondents mention budgeting skills as being key to successful socialization (Ba1, Ma1, Co3, Co6). The budget turns into a signifier that sums up the fundamentals of economic logic in a nutshell. The "real world" of business is a world constituted through budgets. One student describes how the internship socialized him into such an understanding. The respondent accepts the need to adapt while still feeling some discomfort:

They do not really have a purpose other than making money. … That is something you have to decide if it's something that you're okay with. Because when I talk to the employees about cultures and values, some people are a bit frustrated, because … we're not making the world a better place. That's just facts. We're here to make money (Ma2:500).

Another Master's student shares a similar experience and agrees that, at the end of the day, it is all about profit: "The things I saw from their reports and meetings were a lot of money. How to reach the goals and making budgets and such" (Ma1:510).

Ethics and values are not necessarily silenced in the real world of budgets. However, they are not an end in themselves, neither is a constructive and inclusive work culture an end in itself – all these aspects are meaningful for the business organization only if it fits into a budget and contributes to the assets side (Co2). Otherwise, "they do expect that you throw these ethics, or maybe not ethics, but morals – that you are becoming some kind of corporate person" (Ba1:588).

It is surprising that the students who praise applied business-teaching are at the same time concerned about the idea that they may end up being nothing more than a "corporate person." In consequence, the pure enjoyment of doing an interesting task may also be sacrificed. One of the communication consultants provides an example where a student worker was told to work five hours on a task, but ended up working eight hours, simply because she found it so exciting:

> I count the hours how much she's working because I have to make bills for this, but she is not aware of that. She is just working because it's funny to work and do this. For me it's money, you know. But she does not understand that at the same level as I do. So, this understanding of the economic thinking … it's a weakness of the students that they are not aware of (Ag1:399).

The first part of the analysis described the perceived function of universities as a simulation of the real world. The second part identified key characteristics of such a world: companies monopolize it as a world of budgets. Employability is the acceptance of instrumental reasoning. It is based on the conviction that every social practice can be treated as a countable commodity. Socialization takes the form of the transition from a human being to a "corporate person."

Contesting the Real World of Budgets: Polyphony Beyond the Economy (RQ3)

So far, the polyphonic organization enabling socialization as individualization looks more like a naïve normative ideal and less like a theoretical concept helping us to understand organizational socialization practices in the "real" business world. However, many of the quotes above not only construct and legitimize, they concurrently deconstruct the "real world" of "budgets." Its ontological superiority is simultaneously claimed and destroyed (Hoffmann, 2019). Respondents cannot help but refer to societal realities beyond budgets: one person works eight hours instead of five, simply because the task is "fun". Another talks about ethics and values, even though this is undesirable. Yet another is prepared to turn into a "corporate person" while still feeling discomfort about it and one respondent finds discussions about racism in the classroom interesting, even though these seem to have no instrumental value for a business career.

Some students and alumni have even a clear vision of what they would love to do beyond "budgets," while being aware that their passion does not fit into a socialization process that values employability above all else:

- "I like having this deep understanding of the language and how it works. … That probably put me in a position where I had not thought much about what I was going to do afterwards, so I was unemployed for a while" (Al3:215).
- "I really enjoy art and I also thought about studying art history, and I think that this should just be a hobby of mine. So, I'll do this on the side and be interested in art and then I need

to take on a serious study that can give me a job in the end, I guess" (Ba4:547; see also Ba2; Ma3).

In other words, the polyphony of organizational socialization through individualization exists simply because something beyond the real world of budgets is communicated. Even raising these voices signifies a potentially subversive schizo-identification that contests the totality of the corporate world. These are the voices Steve Jobs would love to hear: the voices talking about the "matters of the heart."

Nonetheless, these voices are under the constant pressure of being marginalized by an employability ideology and commodified for business purposes. Two consultants argue that non--business socialization in journalism is useful for a public relations position, but the primacy of the business code ultimately needs to be accepted. Otherwise, role conflicts will ensue:

- "Fresh-from-school journalists are far better than journalists who have worked at a news-paper. Because they do not know how to be consultants …. They do not do very well in the PR industry" (Ag2: 275).
- "It is really hard to turn a journalist because journalists are journalists by heart, … they would always go for the best damn story. Not the story that a company would want you to portray" (Co1: 265).

In other words, socialization in journalism adds value to public relations, but any journalism "by heart" needs to be domesticated – it is not permitted to contest the fundamental instrumental reasoning of the business world. Former media professionals must adapt to the new hierarchy of codes; this is easier if they have not previously worked in journalism for any length of time. The strategic exploitation of journalistic skills for business is what Andersen (2003) called "parasitic codifications in polyphonic organisations" (p. 179). Being informative as the positive coding of the media system is relevant only insofar as it supports the business case.

Similarly, Co1 describes difficulties faced by the company in socializing a committed environmentalist "by heart" for the organization, because the newcomer did not understand the parasitic dimension of the companies' environmental engagement: "I would do it for business purposes, she would do it because it was good for the environment" (Co1:121). Nevertheless, the same respondent points out that the reflection on multiple contextual voices can contribute to a constructive dialogue, e.g. with non-governmental organizations:

It's a good point of departure to reach some agreements. … So we needed to appreciate their logic, and we needed to convince them that we had a fair logic as well since we essentially needed to have a profit, and … settle the balance, … but just being able to appreciate they have another point of view is important (Co1:229).

Even though the respondent sticks with the organization's prioritization of the business code, appreciating other perspectives may lead to more than a parasitic exploitation of polyphony. Deal-making may develop into mutual understanding. Not surprisingly, the same respondent also doubts the value of the instrumental reasoning students adopt in order to be successful in the business world. They

might have a tendency to be instrumental, they want to go out and assume a job, that's what they are studying for. I used to say … when you really get to the depth of your theoretical studies and things start to make sense, … then you have actually demonstrated that you can assume a completely different perspective as to what you might have done intuitively. And I assume that this is one of the biggest learnings that you are able to assume another perspective (Co1:221).

Remember that this quote is from the same respondent who does not "give a fuck" about community relations, since these are of no instrumental value for the company. Schizo-identification describes not only attitudes of students and newcomers towards the organization, but it also shows how established communication professionals within a company relate to contextual voices in society.

Against this background, it is no longer surprising that most respondents appreciate a potential fresh innovative perspective from graduates entering the organization. However, if a student has gone through a marketized education program, an innovation transfer from the higher education institution to the industry may be limited: "No, actually, not once have I heard … a remark on: 'Well, I read that on the 7th semester, or we did that so, so we need to do that approach.' I have never heard that" (Co4:175). The respondent describes the capability to challenge established practices as a personal trait, the university as a socialization agent is not given credit for this (see also Co7). Moreover, even though newcomers are perceived as potential change agents, when we asked for concrete examples of innovations, we got answers such as: "I don't remember precisely" (Co3:276), or "I can't remember exactly what it was" (Co4:211). Mostly, respondents refer to the use of new technologies and social media promoted by newcomers without being able to explain more precisely how that contributed to organizational innovation (Co1; Co3; Co4; Co5; Co6; Ag3; Al2; Al4). Overall, answers indicating the individualization dimension in organizational socialization are rather vague, there are no spectacular game-changing stories.

However, the 'little things' can also be important. One student describes an internship experience during which they successfully convinced the management to take action on Corporate Social Responsibility (Ma3). Another Master student alerted the management to the importance of internal communication and convinced them to intensify it. The interviewer followed up and asked whether this is really that innovative or simply common sense. The student's response:

Yeah, but maybe not. … When you get up at the CEO level, they do not think of communication. They think of getting the financials in place and reaching the budget, and you can say it's common sense, but if they are not aware of it, and they do not think of it … They need people like us to say to them that it's important (Ma1:286–298).

Overall, the real world of budgets is not as hermetic as it seemed to be. Organizational socialization opens the door for polyphonic communication both within and outside the company. Newcomers act as potential change agents – on a very basic level perhaps, but their voices are anything but trivial. They irritate organizations that are stuck in the real world of budgets. The future challenge is to turn such irritation into a productive force that utilizes the benefits of polyphonic socialization processes.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study revitalized the fundamental dualism of organizational socialization as an adaptation process vis-à- vis individualization as a process changing an organization. An identity approach to organizational socialization provided a theoretical and normative direction in order to overcome the linear logic of stage models with total identification as the unquestioned goal. Multi-referential organizational communication establishes overidentifications, disidentifications and schizo-identifications. This kind of paradoxical "mess" is not per se a problem as it provides an opportunity to bring new perspectives to the organization: today's newcomer may be tomorrow's game changer.

Strengthening the identity perspective on organizational socialization is an important theoretical step in going beyond the adaptation paradigm of managerial socialization research. However, it still carries the risk of focusing on the identity building of individual newcomers alone. Therefore, one of the theoretical ambitions of this paper was to include society again. The dualism of monophonic versus polyphonic communication has been embedded in theories that highlight the societal multi-referentiality of every single organization. Based on this, socialization becomes visible as an organizational communication process that either acknowledges or rejects the diversity of contextual societal voices. Such a process not only provides a space for the identity work of individuals but also for organizations balancing, prioritizing, or parasitizing a diversity of system codes from the macro-level of society. A company is not exclusively and from the outset concerned with making money; it is not exclusively subordinated to the economic system. From an ontological perspective, this is quite a radical move: the organization is not a 'smaller' part of a 'larger' system in 'wider' society. Instead, the monophonic or polyphonic organization constitutes its own society.

Societies created by organizations become observable by returning to the micro-level of organizational socialization, which commences long before a graduate joins a company. It is preceded not least by the *vocational anticipatory socialization* of students at higher education institutions. Both universities and employer organizations may either constitute a monophonic market society or leave room for a polyphonic society, where schizo-identification with (future) employers turns into a positive force that challenges the monopoly claim of any contextual voice.

The dualisms of *adaptation vs. individualization* and *monophony vs. polyphony* have been blind spots in the linear stage models of organizational socialization. Although tension-centered identity approaches make them visible as decidable alternatives, the theory itself is not able to decide on them. It is at this point that empirical research needs to take over. This study accepted that challenge: its cornerstones are an adaptation to a monophonic organization, on the one hand, versus individualization that contributes to a polyphonic organization, on the other. They open a whole range of empirical possibilities that previous studies rarely showed in relation to one another, simply because they were separated by the micro-macro gap. Instead, this analysis observes society as constituted on the 'micro-level' of communication. It is based on qualitative interviews and focus groups with students, alumni, and communication professionals from regional companies in Denmark. The theoretical dualisms have been translated into three more specific research questions. The first concerns the perceived relationship between universities and companies as two key socialization agents. It turned out that both professionals and students draw a line between the unreal world of higher education and the real world of business. While higher education is blamed for not being the 'real world,' it is concurrently encouraged to simu-

late it as best as it can. Its output ought to be a quantifiable commodity: work-ready graduates. Thus, the adaptation paradigm is not only applied to the organizational newcomer as an individual, it is also used to legitimize the marketization of universities as institutions. Gibson and Papa (2000) call this process organizational osmosis. If academic helpmates socialize students in the interest of and on behalf of business, the actual entry of the graduate into the company will be less disruptive and less expensive.

The second research question explored the perceived characteristics of the claimed monophonic business world. Its key feature is instrumental reasoning, with profit as the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, the third research question sought acknowledgment of contextual societal voices beyond the coding of the economic system. While one needs a magnifying glass to find them, they are there, and every observed communication of a contextual voice beyond the employability ideology can strengthen the potential of polyphonic socialization driven by non-adaptive, innovative individualization processes.

Of course, introducing a macro-level to the analysis does not mean that the results of this case study can be generalized to the whole world. Every case study needs to accept the inherent limitations resulting from its specific context; the societies constituted by the respondents of the current study might differ significantly from polyphonic voices in other institutional and cultural contexts. Future studies could explore these contexts in more detail:

- Societal level: the economization of society differs from one culture to the next. Its impact on organizational socialization could be explored with cross-cultural research designs.
- Industry and professional level: it has been argued that communication professionals might be more reflexive concerning the multi-referentiality of organizational socialization. It could be worth investigating whether socialization processes in well-established professions, such as lawyers or medical practitioners, are more hermetic, i.e. to an even lesser degree prepared to engage in polyphonic communication.
- Institutional level of higher education programs: the students and alumni in this study were socialized by a kind of hybrid communication program with a vocational focus on the one hand, while embedded into a Faculty of Humanities on the other. Future studies could look at institutional contexts that may come closer to the ideal types of the "having mode" and the "being mode", e.g. comparing the socialization of business school students and philosophy students.

The results of this study appear rather disheartening. The idea of polyphonic socialization offers a great deal, but "structural corruption" (Andersen, 2003, p. 179) across organizational boundaries seems to prevail. It constitutes and defends a pervasive primacy of business logic. One might conclude "that our consumer society would never knowingly pay for a system that effectively encouraged its deconstruction/reconstruction" (Molesworth et al., 2009, p. 285). Thus, business and communication scholars are encouraged all the more "to help students imagine alternative ways of constructing higher education, paid work, and the relationship between education and work" (Lair and Wieland, 2012, p. 448).

Alternative imaginations have also been found in this study and support Brown and Humphreys' (2006) argument that "hegemony is never total and control never complete" (p. 234). Respondents constitute a real world *beyond* budgets simply by communicating it. They may prioritize, but they do not talk only about budgets. They also talk about ethics; they claim social responsibility; they reflect on values such as inclusiveness and, not least, they are able to articu-

late their "matters of the heart" – be it an enthusiasm for grammar or a passion for art history. These "matters of the heart" might be parasitized or subordinated to an employability ideology, but their mere articulation constitutes the polyphony of organizational socialization – a polyphony that ultimately contests the real world of budgets.

Contesting an objectified monophonic world is far from an easy endeavor. After all, only fools question reality. Thus, I would like to finish by again quoting Steve Jobs (2005) and the final words of his farewell address to the graduates: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish."

Acknowledgments

References

Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control: Producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies, 39*(5), 619–644.

Andersen, N. Å. (2003). Polyphonic organisations. In T. Bakken & T. Hernes (Eds.), *Autopoietic organization theory: Drawing on Niklas Luhmann's social system perspective* (pp. 151–182). Oslo, Norway: Abstrakt Forlag.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Bauer, T. N., & Green S. G. (1994). Effects of newcomer involvement in work-related activities: A longitudinal study of socialization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*(2), 211–223.

Belova, O., King, I., & Sliwa, M. (2008). Introduction: polyphony and organization studies. Mikhail Bakhtin and beyond. *Organization Studies, 29*(4), 493–500.

Bora, A. (2001): Öffentliche Verwaltungen zwischen Recht und Politik. Zur Multireferentialität der Programmierung organisatorischer Kommunikation. In V. Tacke (Ed.), *Organisation und gesellschaftliche Differenzierung* (pp. 179–191), Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag.

Brown, A. D., & Humphreys, M. (2006). Organizational identity and place: A discursive exploration of hegemony and resistance. *Journal of Management Studies, 43*(2), 231–257.

Brummans, B. H. J. M., Cooren, F., Robichaud, D., & Taylor, J. R. (2014). Approaches to the communicative constitution of organizations, In L. L. Putnam & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational communication. Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 173–194). 3rd ed., London, UK: Sage.

Bullis, C., & Stout, K. R. (2000). Organizational socialization: A feminist standpoint approach. In P. M. Buzzanell (Ed.), *Rethinking organizational & managerial communication from feminist perspectives* (pp. 47–75), London, UK: Sage.

Bullis, C. (1993). Organizational socialization research: Enabling, constraining, and shifting perspectives. *Communication Monographs, 60*(1), 10–17.

Cheney, G. (1991). *Rhetoric in an organizational society: Managing multiple identities.* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Cheney, G. and Christensen, L. T. (2001). Organizational identity linkages between internal and external communication. In Jablin, F. M. and Putnam, L. L. (Eds.), *New Handbook of Organizational Communication* (pp. 231–269), London, UK: Sage.

Cheney, G., Christensen L. T., & Dailey, S. L. (2014). Communicating identity and identification in and around organizations. In L. L. Putnam & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational communication. Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 695–716). 3rd ed., London, UK: Sage.

Christensen, L. T., Morsing, M., & Thyssen, O. (2015). The polyphony of values and the value of polyphony. *Essachess: Journal for Communication Studies, 8*(1), 9–25.

Clair, R. P. (1996). The political nature of the colloquialism "a real job": Implications for organizational socialization. *Communication Monographs, 63*(3), 249–267.

Dukerich, J. M., Kramer, R., & McLean Parks, J. (1998). The dark side of organizational identification. In D. A. Whetten & P. C. Godfrey (Eds.), *Identity in organizations: Building theory through conversations* (pp. 245–256). London, UK: Sage.

Elsbach, K. D., Bhattacharya, & C. B. (2001). Defining Who You Are By What You're Not: Organizational Disidentification and The National Rifle Association. *Organization Science 12*(4), 393–413.

Falkheimer, J., & Heide, M. (2014). From public relations to strategic communications in Sweden. *Nordicom Review, 35*(2), 132–138.

Forward, G. L., & Scheerhorn, D. (1996). Identity and the assimilation process in the modern organization. In H. B. Mokros (Ed.), *Interaction and Identity* (pp. 371–391), London, UK: Transaction Publishers.

Fromm, E. (1976). *To have or to be?*. London, UK: Continuum.

Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 65*(1), 14–38.

Gibson, M. K., & Papa, M. J. (2000). The mud, the blood, and the beer guys: Organizational osmosis in blue-collar work groups. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 28*(1), 68–88.

Giddens, A. (1984). The constitution of society. Outline of the theory of structuration. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Grønbæk Pors, J. (2012). Experiencing with identity: Paradoxical government in times of resistance, *Tamara: Journal of Critical Organization Inquiry 10*(3), 33–42.

Haigh, N., Walker, J., Bacq, S., & Kickul, J. (2015). Hybrid Organizations: Origins, strategies, impacts, and implications. *California Management Review, 57*(3), 5–12.

Hall, H. (2018). The marketisation of higher education: Symptoms, controversies, trends. *Economics and Law, 17*(1), 33–42. doi:10.12775/EiP.2018.003.

Hazen, M. (1993). Towards polyphonic organization. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 6*(5), 15–26.

Hoffmann, J. (2016). All roads lead Down Under? Ethnocentrism among Australian corporate communication practitioners, *Communication Research and Practice, 2(2),* 244–262.

Hoffmann, J. (2011). In the triangle of civil society, politics, and economy: Positioning magazines of nonprofit organizations. *Voluntas: International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, 22(1),* 93–111.

Hoffmann, J. (2018). Talking into (non)existence: Denying or constituting paradoxes of corporate social responsibility. *Human Relations, 71(5),* 668–691.

Hoffmann, J. (2019). 'Presencing' and 'absencing'. A deconstruction of US-based public relations textbooks, in: I. Somerville, L. Edwards, Ø. Ihlen (Eds.), Public relations, society and the generative power of history (pp. 30–44). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Hoffmann, J. & Lingwall, J. A. (2020). The low-flying communicator: Understanding public relations in a regional context. *Nordicom Review, 41(1),* 85–99.

Jablin, F. M. (1982). Organizational communication: An assimilation approach. In M. E. Roloff & C. R. Berger (Eds.), Social cognition and communication (pp. 255–286). London, UK: Sage.

Jablin, F. M. (1987). Organizational entry, assimilation and exit. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. H. Roberts & L. W. Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 679–740). London, UK: Sage.

Jobs, S. (2005, June 4). 'You've got to find what you love,' Jobs says. Retrieved from https://news.stanford.edu/2005/06/14/jobs-061505

Kramer, M. W., & Miller, V. D. (2013). Socialization and assimilation: Theories, processes, and outcomes, in: L. L. Putnam & D. K. Mumby (Eds.): *The Sage handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 525–548). 3rd ed., London, UK: Sage.

Lair, D. J. & Wieland, S. M. B. (2012). "What are you going to do with that major?" Colloquial speech and the meanings of work and education. *Management Communication Quarterly, 26*(3), 423–452.

Levine, J. M., Moreland R. L., & Choi H. S. (2001). Group socialization and newcomer innovation. In M. A. Hogg, & R. S. Tindale (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Group processes* (pp. 86–106). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Luhmann, N. (1978/2018). *Organization and decision.* Translated from German by Dirk Baecker and Rhodes Barrett, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Molesworth, M., Nixon, E., & Scullion, R. (2009). Having, being and higher education: The marketisation of the university and the transformation of the student into a consumer. *Teaching in Higher Education, 14*(3), 277–287.

Morrison, E. W. (1993). Longitudinal study on the effects of information seeking on newcomer socialization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(2), 173–183.

Morrison, E. W. (2002). Information seeking within organizations. *Human Communication Research, 28*(2), 229–242.

Myers, K. K., Jahn, J. L. S., Gailliard, B. M., & Stoltzfus, K. (2011). Vocational anticipatory socialization (VAS): A communicative model of adolescents interests in STEM. *Management Communication Quarterly, 25*(1), 87–120.

Natale, S. M., & Doran, C. (2012). Marketization of education: An ethical dilemma. Journal of Business Ethics, 105(2), 187–196.

Nixon, E., Scullion, R., & Hearn, R. (2018). Her majesty the student: Marketised higher education and the narcissistic (dis)satisfactions of the student-consumer. *Studies in Higher Education, 43*(6), 927–943.

O'Connor, A., & Raile, A. N. W. (2015). Millenials' "get a 'real job'": Exploring generational shifts in the colloquialism's characteristics and meanings. *Management Communication Quarterly, 29*(2), 276–290.

Papa, M. J., Auwal, M. A., & Singhal, A. (1997). Organizing for social change within concertive control systems: Member identification, empowerment, and the masking of discipline. *Communication Monographs, 64*(3), 1–31.

Roth, S. (2014). The multifunctional organization: Two cases for a critical update for research programs in management and organization. *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry, 12*(3), 37–54.

Schecter, D. (2010). *The critique of instrumental reason from Weber to Habermas.* London: Continuum.

Schneider, L., & Zerfass, A. (2018). Polyphony in corporate and organizational communications: Exploring the roots and characteristics of a new paradigm. *Communication Management Review, 3*(2). Available at http://www.commreview.hr/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2.-CMR-Schneider-Zerfass.pdf (accessed 5 May 2020).

Scott, C., & Myers, K. (2010). Toward an integrative theoretical perspective on organizational membership negotiations: Socialization, assimilation, and the duality of structure. *Communication Theory, 20*(1), 79–105.

Slaughter, S., & Leslie, L. (1997). *Academic capitalism politics: Policies and the entrepreneurial university.* Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Star, S. L., & Griesemer J. R. (1989). Institutional ecology, translations and boundary objects: Amateurs and professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39. *Social Studies of Science, 19*(3), 387–420.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Sullivan, P., Madill, A., Glancy, M., & Allen, P. (2015): Crossing chronotypes in the polyphonic organisation: Adventures in experience. *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry 13*(1–2), 55–65.

Trittin, H., & Schoeneborn, D. (2017). Diversity as polyphony: Reconceptualizing diversity management from a communication-centered perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics, 144*(2), 305–322.

Turner, P. K. (1999). What if you do not?: A response to Kramer and Miller. *Communication Monographs, 66*, 382–389.

Wenzlaff, F. (2019). Economization of society: Functional differentiation and economic stagnation. *Journal of Economic Issues, 53*(1), 57–80.

Wrong, D. (1961). The oversocialized conception of man in modern sociology. *American Sociological Review, 26*(2), 183–193.