Socialization and Identification of New Recruits in Knowledge Intensive Firms

A Case Study

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This thesis is the final phase in the experience called "Managing People, Knowledge and Change". An experience which has caused us joy, stress, but foremost lots of good experiences. The completion of this experience could however have not been fulfilled without the help of several people.

We would therefore like to thank these people who have helped us making this dissertation into the result now presented to you. First of all our supervisor Sverre Spoelstra for his critique, but foremost for the support he granted us. We would also like to thank the interviewees at Alfa Laval AB and more specifically Elna Persson for her tremendous support in selecting and contacting the subjects for our interview, which made our thesis writing lives a lot less stressful. However also, friends, parents and other close ones should not be forgotten, their support has been of great value to us.

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Jason den Drijver & John Gielen

ABSTRACT

Title:	Socialization & Identification of New Recruits in Knowledge Intensive Firms: A Case Study
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Authors:	Jason den Drijver & John Gielen
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Five key words:	Socialization, organizational identity, new recruits, socialization tactics, knowledge intensive firms
Purpose:	The purpose of this study is to find out how the socialization process within a knowledge intensive firm affects new recruits' identification with this firm.
Methodology:	The study is qualitative where data has been collected through interviews with recently recruited employees and an observation of an introductory presentation for new sales personnel
Theoretical perspectives:	There are two main theoretical perspectives used for this study. The first relates to the theory of organizational socialization with regards to Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) model of the classification of socialization tactics. The second relates to the Dutton et al.'s (1994) member identification model.
Empirical foundation:	Findings from our study and given literature suggest that the socialization tactics as described by Van Maanen and Schein (1977) did not have a direct impact on new recruit's identification with the organization. Controversially anticipatory socialization as the organizations culture of openness and friendliness enhanced new recruits identification with the organization. The strength of the members identification which was established by means of Dutton et al.'s (1997) propositions of member identification and the three categories of self-continuity, self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement.
Conclusions:	Using the models from van Maanen and Schein (1977) and Dutton et al. (1994), we have been able to investigate the socialization process and organizational identification both from the organizational as well as the individual's perspective. The link between these two perspectives establishes a better insight into the company's actual socialization intentions and the individual's identification with the firm. From our research it is indicated that the *perceived* organizational identity affects new recruits identification with the company in a strong sense. However this identification was not enhanced by the socializition tactics of either individualization or institutionalization. We have hence found factors within Alfa Laval which seemed to enhance new recruits identification and socialization with the company. These factors include a culture which is open, friendly, informal and international, and a working environment which is challenging but with full of opportunities. Addtionally a finding was that none of the new recruits could specifically state the values of the organization, but that they merely made up their own sets of perceived organizational values which they thought identified the company.

> *"Unlike a drop of water which loses its identity when it joins the ocean, man does not lose his being in the society in which he lives. Man's life is independent. He is born not for the development of the society alone, but for the development of his self."*
>
> **B. R. Ambedkar**

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1 INTRODUCTION

This introduction describes the purpose of this thesis; our motivations as well as the associated contributions of this thesis with respect to current established theories on socialization and identification theory. Accordingly the research questions, which form the basis for this thesis, are introduced. Lastly an outline of this thesis will be presented.

1.1 MOTIVATION

Companies are constantly trying to attract high potential graduates towards their firms in order to remain (hopefully) successful in the future. However with the increasing tension on the job market this seems to be a difficult thing to achieve. Therefore employers are constantly searching for ways to overcome this problem. A study by The Conference Board ("Corporate Identity a Motivator," 2001) showed that employer branding seems to be a key motivator for retaining and obtaining employees. Where employer branding is seen as the identity of the firm as an employer; overarching the values, systems, policies and behaviors of and towards its employees.

Even though employer branding is not the main concept used in this thesis, above research findings have a strong indicator of what this dissertation focuses on. Setting certain prepositions and expectations towards future employees have certain indications on how the future employees will socialize in, and identify with, the company. Too high expectations might resolve in lower employee satisfaction or new employees feeling uncomfortable with their employer. However not only previous set images influence the newcomers' identity, also employers socialization efforts with respect to getting newcomers acquainted to values, systems, policies and behavior during the commencing months of employment are of influence to the amount in which employees identify (or resist) with their employer.

This dissertation has the objective to assess the effect of the socialization process of new recruits' identification with the organization, additionally assessing whether or not their ideals and values fit with those of the organization. The distinctive aspect of this dissertation is that it tries to establish a link between currently existing research on socialization and identity theory. These streams seem to work in parallel with each other, and limited research has been done to establish if there exists a link between socialization and identification. As Ashforth and Mael (1989: 25) state, "to identify, an individual need not expand effort toward the group's goals; rather, an individual needs only to perceive him or herself as psychologically

intertwined with the fate of the group". This thus already indicates that a better congruence between the individual and the organization leads to a better socialization into the group's goals. Coupland (2001) identified that graduates acknowledge and refute change during their employment, additionally contrasting their self-descriptions with the company 'ideal'. One of the motivations of this thesis is to find out this link between socialization and identification, if existent, and if so how it is established. In the literature chapter a wider discussion on this aspect will be set about.

1.2 CONTRIBUTIONS

Exercising qualitative research on the socialization and identity formation of new recruits in a manufacturing firm, in this case Alfa Laval, with a strong established corporate culture will contribute us with valuable information about this issue. The contributions of this research are twofold; first of all there are the theoretical contributions, and secondly off course the practical implications of the results.

The theoretical contributions are build upon the lack of qualitative research in the area of socialization theory, more specifically the socialization tactics model developed by van Maanen and Schein (1977) and Jones (1986). Even though the qualitative results are less generalizable, they should be able to give a deeper insight in these models. Additionally, this research will address particularly the situation of socialization and identity formation by means of corporate values in companies with a well developed and highly knowledgeable workforce. Further developing into recommendations on how corporate values and company image affect the identification of new recruits. By using this qualitative approach, we hope new insights on existing theories will be developed and elaborated upon.

From a practical perspective this research hopes to make management (especially at Alfa Laval) aware of the effect their current policy and strategy with respect to the recruitment of new entrants in their organization will lead to a (less) successful socialization. The fact that the organization could be considered a knowledge intensive firm enhances the generalizability of the results presented to you later on in the thesis.

Furthermore it should give an insight in how corporate values, and additionally actively working with these values, contributes to first of all people joining the company and second of all fitting to the company in earlier stages of their employment. Hence giving an insight if the way in which the company portrays itself is in line with the expectations of recent graduates.

More specifically this thesis should be of interest on the academic side to persons interested in socialization and identification in general, but more specifically towards the establishment of new recruits' identity when entering an organization. On the business side this thesis is of interest for management working with recruitment, and socialization of (potential) organizational members. It also involves the members themselves in order to identify how the socialization process has an effect on their identification with the firm.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The increasing tendency nowadays for corporations to use corporate values, ideologies, and policies in their recruitment and socialization strategies, and the fact that this has not been stressed in existing literature supplies us with an interesting research area. As discussed before the link between socialization and identity is an area still to be researched and explored. On the other hand, the fact that most research in these areas has been done on a quantitative and not qualitative level enhances the need for additional research on the level of socialization of new recruits. This is due to the fact that quantitative research requires a specific classification of data, which has the possibility of building incorrect assumptions[i]. Merely for the fact that qualitative analysis gives a more complete and better description, and overcomes the classification necessity associated with quantitative research. This given, the scope and purpose of this study can be concentrated into the following research questions:

> *"The study of the socialization process of new recruits into Alfa Laval: How does this affect their identification with knowledge intensive firms?"*

However this research question still remains at a rather broad level. Therefore we elaborate this research question in several sub-questions, which should bring us closer to answering the initial purpose of this thesis.

- ✓ How does the perceived organizational identity affect the new recruits association and identification with the organization?
- ✓ Does organizational socialization tactic attribute to the new recruits identification with the organizations' goals and values?
- ✓ Does the socialization process lead to a unified identification with the researched company or can the perceived identification be addressed to other factors present?

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[i] i.e. van Maanen and Schein's use custodial vs. innovative role behavior as the underlying classification in their research, this already implies that these are absolute opposites, which accordingly could be argued as incorrect. A finding which is also discussed later in this dissertation.

✓ Does the overlap between the characteristics that a member beliefs to typify him or her as an individual and the characteristics that typify the organization indicate a stronger organizational identification?

To answer these research questions two main theoretical frameworks are used. First of all there is the socialization tactics framework introduced by van Maanen and Schein (1977). This framework will merely be used to give a background on how the socialization tactics, as used by the researched company, have an influence on individual's socialization process. Using this theory as a background to explain company initiated socialization, secondly we use the 'member identification model' (Dutton et al., 1994). This theory points out that organizations have collective identities primarily consisting of beliefs which are shared as distinctive, central and enduring amongst members. The member identification model builds upon the socialization tactic model in a way that it looks at the socialization process from a more individual perspective. Since past socialization theories have merely looked upon socialization from a corporate perspective, and identity theory has a strong individual perspective it could be argued that both frameworks complement each other.

1.4 THESIS OUTLINE

In order to reach our conclusions this thesis will be organized as follows. In the literature review we will start off with an overview of existing literature on both socialization and identification. Beginning with the socialization framework of van Maanen and Schein (1977) after which Dutton et al.'s (1994) 'member identification model' will be introduced. After the literature introduction the methodology underlying this thesis is discussed. The methodology is set after the literature for the fact that the research method used can be better explained with the underlying frameworks in mind. In the methodology the perspective and research techniques are explained, together with the associated limitations of these methods. Following the methodology the results and findings are presented. Here first an introduction of Alfa Laval is given. Here the findings of the interviews and observations conducted are laid out and analyzed. Preceding the conclusion a discussion of the previous found results and analysis is given. In the conclusion the research questions will be specifically answered, deriving from answering the sub-questions to consequently answer the main research question stated above. The final part of this thesis consists of recommendations for future research, as well as practical contributions of this research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the literature review we discuss two main streams of literature. First of all a literature overview on socialization theory is given, and more specifically the socialization tactics model as developed by van Maanen and Schein (1977). Secondly identity theory is discussed, in specific Dutton et al.'s (1994) member identification model. The reason for discussing these two streams of literature is that there exists a limited linkage between these two topics in current literature. Since socialization is more collectively oriented and identity more individually focused, it is our opinion that it is better to approach these two separately. In the discussion a more specific relation between these two concepts is elaborated upon. This literature review is finalized with a characterization of knowledge intensive firms (KIF); a characterization which is given to support the association of Alfa Laval as a KIF.

2.1 SOCIALIZATION

Socialization theory has often been described as fragmented and poorly understood (Fisher, 1986). This has as a result that no single theory on socialization exists. One of the most researched theories is Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) model of socialization tactics which specifies the linkages between specific socialization variables and resulting behavioral responses. This theory will represent an important part in this thesis and will therefore be more elaborated upon later on in this chapter.

Other developed theories on socialization are the uncertainty reduction theory, which states that socialization occurs when newcomers try to decrease the existing uncertainty within their new working environment. This reduction takes place through communication, different information sources, and social networks (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). Another important theory on socialization is the cognitive and sense-making theory (Louis, 1980) and deals with the cognitive approach of socialization; newcomers make sense of surprises in the socialization process through interaction with insiders and alteration of existing cognitive networks.

One should keep in mind that these theoretical frameworks are not mutually exclusive or solely contradict each other. It can already be understood from the above explanation that there exists a high level of correlation between the different theories. Saks and Ashforth (1997) developed a multi-level process model of organizational socialization which links these different perspectives into a single model (also see Figure 1). Even though this thesis mainly elaborates upon the model of socialization tactics and the social cognitive theory, the

other theories should not be treated as irrespective or irrelevant to the discussed theories as was also discussed by Saks and Ashforth (1997).

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS
- Extra-organizational
- Organization level
- Group level
- Job/role level

SOCIALIZATION FACTORS

ORGANIZATIONAL:
- Socialization tactics*
- Orientation programs
- Training programs
- Mentoring programs

GROUP:
- Socialization tactics*
- Social support
- Social learning processes

INDIVIDUAL:
- Proactive strategies and behavior

INFORMATION
▼
UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION
▼
LEARNING

COGNITIVE SENSE-MAKING

PROXIMAL OUTCOMES
- Role clarity
- Person-job/organization fit
- Skill acquisition
- Social integration
- Social identification
- Motivation
- Personal change
- Role orientation

DISTAL OUTCOMES

ORGANIZATIONAL:
- Stronger culture
- Higher morale
- More stable membership
- Higher effectiveness
- Reputation

GROUP:
- Stronger subculture
- Stronger cohesion
- More stable membership
- Higher effectiveness
- Reputation

INDIVIDUAL:
- Lower stress
- Higher job satisfaction
- Higher org. commitment
- Lower absenteeism & turnover
- Higher org. citizenship behaviors
- Higher performance
- Role conformity / role innovation**

* The model assumes institutionalized socialization tactics rather than individualized
**The relative weight depends on the group's and organization's values
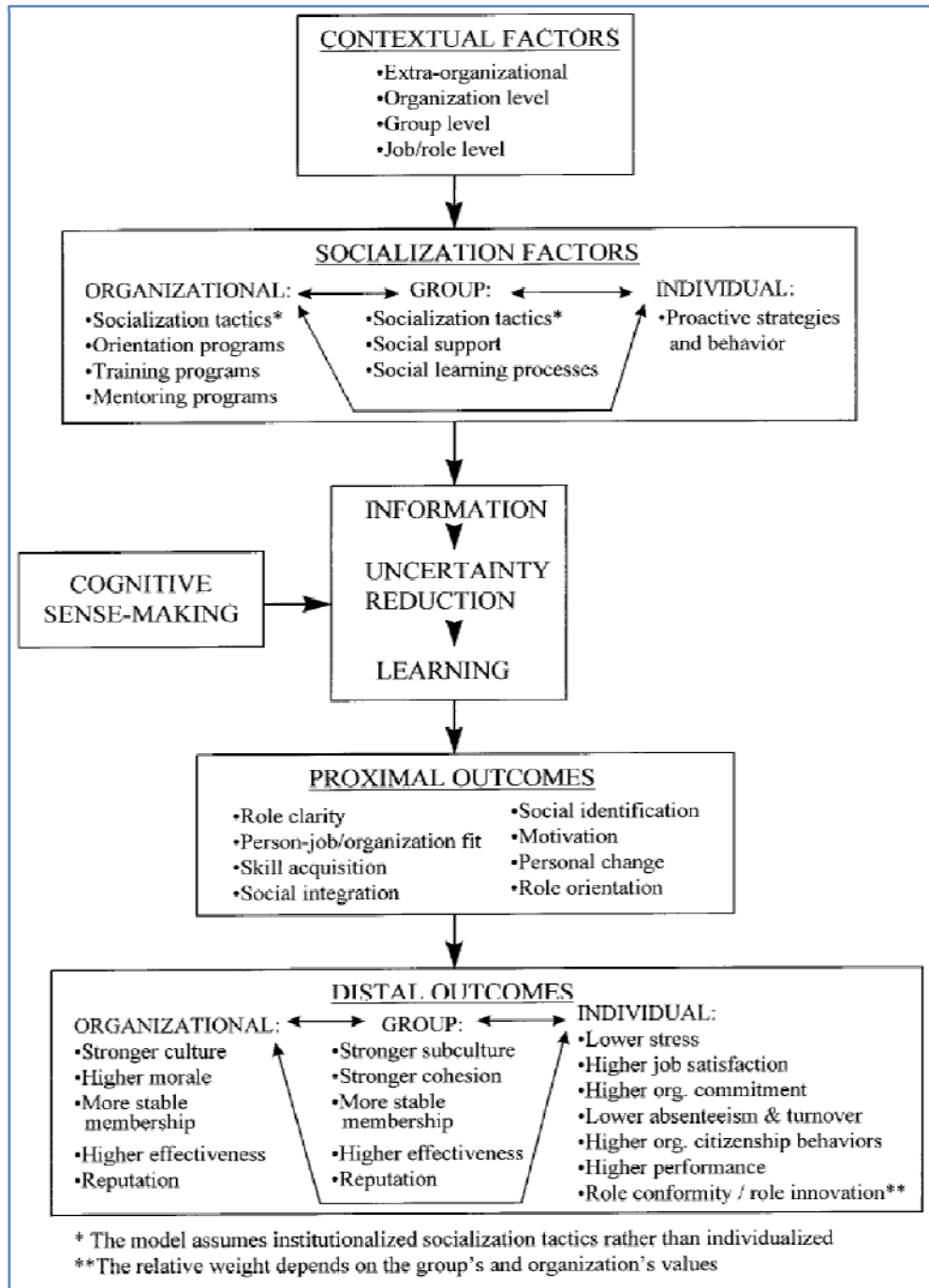
Figure 1: A Multi-Level Process Model of Organizational Socialization (Saks & Ashforth, 1997)

2.1.1 ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION

Organizational socialization has retrieved significant attention within socialization theory. Feldman (1976b), defined socialization as the way in which employees are transformed from total organization outsiders to participating and effective employees. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) elaborated and distinguished Feldman's theory on socialization into *organizational* socialization. They described this concept as the "process by which one is taught and consequently learns 'the ropes' of a particular organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977: 3). Van Maanen and Schein merely depict socialization to be a responsibility of the organization and not the individual as such. However, Nelson (1987) additionally states that socialization can also occur by the informal organization, and that organizational initiation is not necessarily needed. Louis (1980: 229) described organizational socialization more on the cultural side, which described it as being "the process by which an individual comes to understand the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge that are essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organization member." The following section explains the socialization theory relevant for newcomer's socialization.

NEWCOMER SOCIALIZATION

On the side of newcomer socialization several researches have been conducted (Ashforth, Saks, & Lee, 1998; Chatman, 1991; Louis, 1980; Saks, Uggerslev, & Fassina, 2007; Wanous & Burack, 1982). Even though socialization has been identified to be of an ongoing process in organizations, members are particularly susceptible to the organization's influence in the early stages of membership; during the 'newcomer' period (Berlew & Hall, 1966). Wanous and Burack (1982) identified that organizational entry can be seen from both an organizational or a individual perspective. This individual perspective on socialization is merely based on expectancy theory which deals with the fact that an alignment of expectation leads to a more satisfying outcome. For the individual perspective of socialization and identification with the organization we chose to use the 'member identification model' developed by Dutton et al. (1994), which will be explained later on in this chapter.

A part of the new recruit's socialization process is the anticipatory organizational socialization. This encompasses all of the learning that takes place prior to the graduate's first day on the job (Garavan & Morley, 1997). However, in socialization theory there is a discussion taking part which argues if participatory socialization and newcomers' orientation should actually be seen as part of overall organizational socialization. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) stated that organizational socialization encompasses such a broad topic, that

newcomer orientation should be included. Wanous et al. (1992) argued controversially that a new recruits orientation is short-term, whereas socialization encompasses a longer and unspecified period that deals with the conformity of newcomers to organizational norms and values. Since the orientation in this thesis is specifically on the confirmation of new recruits on organizational norms and values, the position that anticipatory and newcomer orientation as part of socialization is taken.

Anticipatory socialization encompasses the initial identification of newcomers with the firm, in which expectations about the job are set. Anticipatory socialization and consequently the individuals' fit with the organization is dependent on two main variables. Firstly, realism to the extent where individuals have a full and accurate picture of what life in the organization is really like. Second, congruence which indicates to what extent the organization's resources and individual needs are mutually satisfying (Feldman, 1976a). The factor of congruence is also researched under the name of psychological contract. Here the graduate puts up his set of expectations with respect to his/her potential contributions to the organization and the possible organizations response (Garavan & Morley, 1997).

According to Wanous and Burack (1982) it is important to research the individual side of socialization since job satisfaction and performance, especially for new entrants, is heavily dependent on the newcomers prior set of expectations. Additionally outsiders might join an organization based on faulty information, because of the generally occurring naiveté of newcomers. Wanous and Burack (1982) furthermore stated that newcomers entry has a profound effect on the 'cognitive maps' of the individuals entering a firm in comparison to people having entered the company long before. Moreover stating that job role fit and job satisfaction is heavily related to realistic job previews.

	Institutionalized	Individualized
Context	Collective	Individual
	Formal	Informal
Content	Sequential	Random
	Fixed[*]	Variable
Social Aspects	Serial	Disjunctive
	Investiture[*]	Divestiture

Table 1: A Classification of Socialization Tactics (Jones, 1986)

* Indicates a reverse effect as hypothesized by van Maanen and Schein (1977)

SOCIALIZATION TACTICS

Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) theory of organizational socialization categorized six tactics which structures the work experiences of new entrants and recent graduates into three domains. These socialization *tactics* are defined as "the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977: 34). These socialization tactics correspond accordingly into the following socialization responses; newcomers' custodial, content-innovative and role-innovative responses. When performing a custodial role newcomers' do not question, hence accept the status quo in which he or she is residing. Content innovative behavior can be defined as "the development of substantive improvements or changes in the knowledge base or strategic practices of a particular role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977: 31), which follows in enhancing instead of changing company missions or goals. The last response, role-innovativeness, is characterized by an individual attacking and changing the goals associated with the particular job. From this van Maanen and Schein (1977) identified that the newcomers response can gravitate towards either custodial or innovative behavior; the outcome which is dependent on the socialization tactics used by the organization.

Whereas van Maanen and Schein (1977) differentiated the response side of the socialization tactics, Jones (1986) further categorized the tactics into, on the one hand, content, context, and social aspects, (Table 1, p. 8) which all have a specific influence on the socialization responses, and on the other hand individualized vs. institutionalized tactics. The context related socialization tactics are, first of all the collective (vs. individual) socialization; this tactic involves grouping newcomers thereby letting them experience common things. Secondly there is the tactic of formal (vs. informal) socialization, which indicates the choice to specifically identify newcomers or to integrate them into the existing workforce. The content related tactics consist of the sequential (vs. random) tactic, which deals with a fixed program new entrants have to follow. Additionally also the fixed (vs. variable) tactic was been identified. Fixed socialization provides a new recruit with an exact timetable of the socialization process. The social related tactics are the serial (vs. disjunctive) tactic which is concerned with the use of a role model (mentor) and the investiture (vs. divestiture) tactic which deals with the acknowledgement of a new entrants identity, rather than denying its identity. It was anticipated by van Maanen and Schein (1977) that newcomers respond differently to their roles because of the difference of using the above described tactics. It is

according to these authors that behavioral outcomes (custodial, content-innovative, or role-innovative) can be manipulated and predicted.

These bipolar socialization tactics were generalized into institutional and individual tactics. Institutionalization reduces the uncertainty related to employing newcomers and has a high formality and structure, whereas the individualized socialization enables newcomers to question the status quo and develop their own approach (Jones, 1986; Saks et al., 2007). The institutionalized socialization has as a result that newcomers passively accept the pre-set roles, thereby accepting the organization status quo (custodial role behavior). Individualization leads to an absence of structure, coherently leading to a more default socialization (Saks et al., 2007). This also increases the possibility of performance uncertainty as well as increased anxiety (Jones, 1986; Saks et al., 2007).

Another finding of the research by Jones was that social tactics have the highest socialization impact (followed by content and context tactics). Also both the findings by Jones (1986) and van Maanen and Schein (1977) confirm that institutionalized socialization leads to a more custodial orientation, in contrast to an innovative orientation. However, still small differences in their findings exist. Van Maanen and Schein (1977) argued that sequential tactics lead to role conformity, and variable tactics to custodial responses, since variability leads to uncertainty which encourages conformity. Jones (1986) on the other hand states that a variable tactic inclines new entrants to deal with uncertain situations, thereby increasing innovativeness. The newcomer is hence constantly searching for ways to move up in the organization. Fixed socialization, according to Jones (1986) decreases innovativeness, leading to more custodial responses. The argumentation behind this is that a newcomer knows how a career path will develop; hereby conformity is already entailed by the tactic. Ashforth and Saks (1996) take this even a step further. They state that an institutionalized strategy can also be associated with innovative outcomes for the fact that it is the skills, attitudes and behaviors which are learned, and not necessarily the content of the job as such. Black (1992) proved in his research among expatriate managers that collective, serial and fixed tactics had a positive association with role innovation. Recent research by Saks et al. (2007) indicated a completely different outcome from what past research has shown. According to these authors a combination of tactics can be used, instead of picking either individualized or institutionalized orientation, in order to reach a more blended socialization response. As they state; "it is conceivable that an organization might employ institutionalized *social* tactics to promote

strong attachment to the job and organization but also employ individualized *content* and *context* tactics to promote an innovative role orientation" (Saks et al., 2007: 442).

PROACTIVE SOCIALIZATION

The approach taken by van Maanen and Schein (1977) implied that newcomers either passively or actively respond to what organizations do to them. Recently however, proactive socialization has come up as one of the most important areas in socialization research (Saks et al., 2007). Proactive socialization takes newcomers as agents who actively work to reduce uncertainty in their work environments through their own initiative (Feij, Whitely, Peiró, & Taris, 1995; Morrison, 1993). This socialization tactic has become more prevalent due to the fact that newcomers attach less value to one-company careers, which has as a result that less emphasis is put on centralized socialization and training, and more on task-centered opportunities for learning (Schein, 1996). Proactive socialization could hence also be seen as an explanation for the divergent results found with respect to socialization tactics and role orientation as made by Saks et al. (2007).

Proactive socialization has been researched to have an influence on several outcomes. Newcomers actively participating in behavioral self-management were found to have lower levels of stress and more positive satisfaction with their job (Saks & Ashforth, 1996). Newcomers use consequently six approaches to reach socialization; networking, general socializing, building relationships with one's boss, negotiating job changes, positive framing, and information seeking (Ashford & Black, 1996). Proactive socialization was also found to have a significant impact on how newcomers search for information. Newcomers identified supervisors as the most important information source, which again resulted in more positive socialization outcomes.

It seems thus obvious that van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization tactics should be adjusted towards the standards of today's organizational life. Proactive socialization seems to have initiated this change towards a model more consistent with the changing workforce ethics and behaviors[ii]. In the next section, the individual changes with respect to socialization are briefly discussed, however more about this can be found in the chapter on identification.

[ii] As a concluding remark it should be noted that proactive socialization is relatively new area in today's socialization literature. Therefore this approach could relate more appropriately to today's working environment and hence should deserve more attention in potential socialization literature.

2.1.2 NEWCOMER CHANGE: ROLE VS. PERSON CHANGE

As noted before, Jones (1986) stated that institutionalized socialization tactics elaborate on letting new entrants accepting the organizational status quo, whereas individualized socialization tactics develop unique approaches for newcomers' roles (custodial vs. innovative role orientation). However besides the change of role behavior by new entrants also the newcomers' personal changes should be notified (Ashforth & Saks, 1996). Person change is seen as the adjustment of an individual's values, attitudes, personality, and career plans (Ashforth & Saks, 1996). Even though it has generally been accepted that a person change only occurs to the more labile self, and that in theory the recruitment process already fits the person to an organization which overcomes additional personal socialization. This remains heavily hypothetical, since person change is also found in organizations which have a very strong established organizational culture. In the next section the part of individual identification with respect to their pre-occurring organizational image will be more elaborated upon.

2.2 IDENTITY FORMATION

In this section an overview of existing identity literature relevant to this thesis is discussed. Additionally discussing the propositions as identified by Dutton et al. (1994), which form the basis for this thesis.

2.2.1 IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Many companies today face the ongoing project of strengthening their image both externally and internally. It becomes interesting in different ways on how individual identity can be explored and how organizations try to shape this type of phenomenon. Dutton et al. (1994) devised a model to explain how images of one's work organization shape the strength of the person's identification with the organization. This model focuses on two key organizational images. The first one being what a person believes is distinctive, central and enduring about their organization, and the second focuses on a person's beliefs about what people from the outside think about the organization. The model, which will be discussed later, proposes a number of ways organizational identification can affect patterns of socialization (Dutton et al., 1994).

ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGES AND MEMBER IDENTIFICATION

People's identity can vary depending on how much they identify themselves with work organization. If a person identifies themselves strongly with the organization, the attributes

they use to define the organization also defines them (Dutton et al., 1994). Dutton et al. (1994) go on to explain that an individual's cognitive connection with their work organization is obtained from the images they have of that organization. The two images explained are the perceived organizational identity, which entails what the individual believes is distinctive, central, and enduring about the organization, and the second image is the construed external image, which involves the believes the individual holds about what outsiders think of the organization (Dutton et al., 1994).

Organizational identity is described by Dutton et al. (1994) as the degree to which members define themselves by the same attributes that they believe defines the organization. This is an important area that we will explore throughout this thesis. An important starting point would be to know what exactly makes an individual identify themselves strongly with the organization. Dutton et al. (1994) give two reasons as to when a person is strongly identified with an organization. The first is when their identity, as someone belonging to an organization, is more salient than alternative identities, and the second is when the individual's self-concept has many of the same characteristics they believe define the organization as a social group. Each individual's image that they hold of the work organization is unique. Because of this an employee beliefs may or may not coincide with those of a collective organizational identity that represents the individuals shared beliefs of what is distinctive, central, and enduring about their organization (Albert & Whetten, 2004). The theory from Dutton et al. (1994) focuses on the relationship between the employees individual images of their organization as a social group and the effects of those images on the strength of organizational identification and behavior.

One area that we will focus on in our thesis is linking organizational images to an individual's self-concepts. Organizational membership can present positive attributes on its members, and people may feel proud to belong to an organization that is believed to have socially valued characteristics (Dutton et al., 1994). When members believe that outsiders have a positive view about the organization, they will feel respected, important and blissful of the organization (Cialdini et al., 1976: 366). It also has to be taken into account that there may be negative attributes on an employee. If the image of the organization is seen as unfavorable, the individual may experience negative personal outcomes, such as depression and stress (Dutton et al., 1994). The model explained is the theory that we hope to relate our findings to and determine how employees are affected by the organizational image in respect to their own image. Negative outcomes like these could result in undesirable organizational outcomes, for

example increased competition amongst employees or reduced performance. Consequently leading the employee to an eventual exit from the organization (Dutton et al., 1994; Kahn, 1990). We also need to take into account when it comes to positive and negative attributes, that personal feelings not related to the organization may affect these attribute as well.

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

When members incorporate the characteristics they attribute to their organization into their self-concepts, they become more attached to that organization (Dutton et al., 1994). A person's self-concept may be composed of a variety of identities, each of which evolves from membership in different social groups, such as race, gender, or tenure (Breakwell, 1986; Dutton et al., 1994; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Asforth and Mael (1989) state however that self-concepts are also influenced by memberships in work organizations, where that specific member may come to identify with the organization. Dutton et al. (1994) focus in their theory on the cognitive connection between the definition of the organization and the self-definition, seen as a process of identification, a person applies to themselves. The degree which the content of a member's self-concept is coupled to their organizational membership reflects the strength of the person's organizational identity.

2.2.2 DUTTON'S "MEMBER IDENTIFICATION MODEL"

Dutton et al. (1994), point out that organizations have collective identities which primarily consist of beliefs which are shared as distinctive, central, and enduring amongst members. This collective identity is enforced by strong organizational members through engaging in communication and influence processes such as rituals, ceremonies, and stories. The collective identity can surface when there are actions or changes in the organizations environment such as regulatory changes or competitive moves (Dutton et al., 1994).

Dutton et al. (1994) have devised a model which links perceived organizational identity, a member's belief about the distinctive, central, and enduring attributes of the organization, and construed external image to the strength of organizational identity. They have created a number of propositions which we will follow through-out our investigation and how it relates to the members we will interview in the selected organization.

The propositions (Dutton et al., 1994) are;

> **Proposition 1:** *"The greater the attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity, the stronger a person's organizational identification."*

There are three principles which account for the attractiveness of an organizational image why it strengthens identification. They are self-definition, self-continuity, self- distinctiveness, and self-enhancement (Dutton et al, 1994).

> *Proposition 2: "The greater the consistency between the attributes members use to define themselves and the attributes used to define an organizational image, the stronger a member's organizational identification."*

Perceived organizational identity becomes more attractive to an individual when it matches their own sense of who they are, i.e., their self-concept. This is because that type of information is easy to process and understand. Also when the self-concept and perceived organizational identity are similar, a member is drawn to the organization because easy opportunities for self-expression are provided. A high level of member's organizational identification, attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity, and continuity all help members to maintain a stable self-concept over time (Dutton et al., 1994).

> *Proposition 3: "The greater the distinctiveness of an organizational image relative to other organizations, the stronger a member's organizational identification."*

When the social identities of member within the organization provide them with a sense of distinctiveness, the organization becomes more attractive (Dutton et al., 1994). The level of identifying with the organization becomes stronger when there is a distinctiveness of group values and practices in relation to those of comparable groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989)

> *Proposition 4: "The more an organizational image enhances a member's self- esteem, the stronger his or her organizational identification."*

The self-esteem of a member is enhanced when they associate themselves to an organization that has an attractive perceived identity. The reason for this is that they acquire a more positive evaluation of self. When a company displays or associate themselves with positive qualities such as competence, power, efficacy, virtue, or moral worth, members are more likely to see the perceived organizational identity as appealing (Dutton et al., 1994)..

> *Proposition 5: "The more contact a member has with an organization (in terms of intensity and duration), the greater the attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity and the stronger the organizational identification."*

The longer a member is part of an organization the more they are exposed to the collective organizational identity which makes organizational attributes more accessible in memory. The longer a member stays within the organization, self-categorization becomes more salient and organizational membership becomes primary over other memberships (Dutton et al., 1994)..

> **Proposition 6:** *"The greater the attractiveness of an organization's construed external image, the stronger a member's organizational identification."*

Construed external images involve a member's beliefs about the perceptions outsiders have of the organization. Not only will this provide information about the social evaluation of the organization but also what outsiders think of the actual member being associated to the organization. Organizational image focus on both beliefs of outside members (reputation) as well as inside members (construed external image). Both insiders and outsiders have different access to the organization and apply different values and goals interpreting this information (Dutton et al., 1994)..

> **Proposition 7:** *"The greater the visibility of a member's affiliation with the organization, the stronger the relationship between the attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity and his or her organizational identification."*

People are more frequently reminded of their organizational membership when they are visibly associated with that organization. These visible associations are constant reminders or organizational membership and increase the effectiveness of the organization as a source of self-definition (Dutton et al 1994).

> **Proposition 8:** *"The greater the visibility of a member's affiliation with the organization, the stronger the relationship between the attractiveness of the construed external image and a member's organizational identification."*

When a person's affiliation to a specific organization is made public, it creates expectations about the individual's behaviors and attitudes that they hold. Certain attributes held within perceived organizational identity are more likely to become part of the member's own self-concept which can either strengthen or weaken identification. When the organizations affiliation is visible it also creates an intense desire for members to portray an impression for other that is consistent with the construed external image (Dutton et al., 1994).

There are also consequences of organizational identification when it comes to individuals' beliefs and behaviors. One consequence is the strengthening of its antecedents. When

members strongly identify with an organization, their beliefs about the organization become stronger and hence believe that the organization is producing valuable outputs. The consequence of these evaluations causes the attractiveness of perceived organizational identity and construed external image to increase (Dutton et al., 1994). This leads to the next proposition:

> ***Proposition 9:*** *"The greater the strength of organizational identification, the more members will evaluate the perceived organizational identity and construed external image as attractive."*

Strong organizational identification also affects behaviors which in turn strengthen the antecedents of organizational identification. Members who identify themselves to the organization in a strong way will tend to seek more contact with the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). This leads to the 10th proposition:

> ***Proposition 10:*** *"The greater the strength of the organizational identification, the more a member will seek contact with the organization."*

These ten propositions from Dutton et al. (1994) fit into the member identification model they have created, shown below in Figure 2:
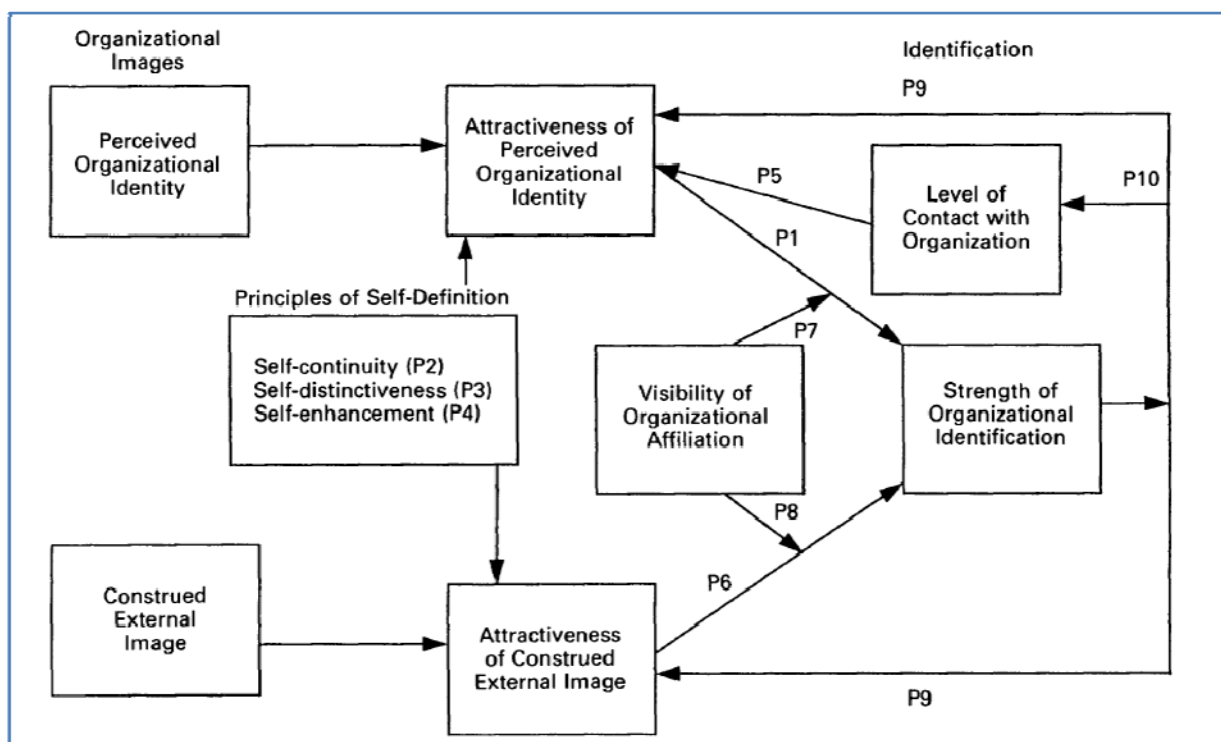

Figure 2: Member Identification Model (Dutton et al., 1994)

2.3 KNOWLEDGE INTENSIVE FIRMS

Knowledge intensive firms (KIFs) can be loosely and preliminarily defined as organizations that offer the market the use of fairly sophisticated knowledge or knowledge-based products (Alvesson, 2004: 18). For a firm to become knowledge-intensive, the size of its knowledge-intensive workforce must be rather extensive. Alvesson (2004) differentiates between two types of KIFs: professional and R&D firms. The difference between these is that R&D organization more specifically produce a product, and has a narrower sales interface. Professional firms deal more directly with the market, and deal with intangibles.

2.3.1 CHARACTERIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE INTENSIVE FIRMS

Newell et al. (2002) identified three distinctive characteristics of knowledge work and knowledge workers. First of all they indicate that knowledge workers have considerable autonomy in their work which is characterized by creativity and problem solving (Newell et al., 2002: 27). The knowledge worker itself initiates, plans, organizes and control the work tasks. Because they own and possess the knowledge a certain amount of autonomy is expected by them. A second factor by which knowledge workers are distinguished is co-location, meaning that there is a need to work remote from the employing firm. A last factor Newell et al. (2002) indicate is that these workers need to be managed carefully, and provided with excellent working environment and terms and conditions of employment.

Alvesson (2004) adds to this several factors which distinguish a KIF from ordinary organizations, which are: ad-hoc organizational form, extensive communication for problem-solving, information asymmetry and highly qualified individuals using intellectual skills. One should however bear in mind that a firm does not need to possess all these characteristics in order to be qualified as a KIF. As Alvesson (2004: 39) states; "the category of KIFs is loose and vague, and it is difficult to find strict criteria separating it from that of non-KIFs."

In the analysis chapter argumentation is given why Alfa Laval is a KIF, and more specifically why the interviewees should be considered as knowledge workers.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In the above literature review an introduction on the underlying frameworks of this thesis are given. Van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization tactics model is used to identify the organizational initiation towards new recruits socialization. The member identification model (Dutton et al., 1994) established a new recruits identification with the organization by means

of perceived organizational identity. These have been discussed separate since they are two different bodies of literature, at least up and until now. Later on these two frameworks will be cross-referenced and the coherent factors will be discussed. The section on KIFs is implemented for the fact that Alfa Laval is recognized as a KIF, for means discussed later.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methodology underlying this thesis is presented and elaborated upon. First of all the perspective, based on an interpretative approach, is discussed. After this the methods through which the data was gathered will be explained, together with their drawbacks. Hereafter we discuss the interview design. The chapter is ended with the limitations associated with the chosen perspective.

3.1 PERSPECTIVE

An important feature that distinguishes qualitative data from quantitative data is that it starts from the perspectives and actions of the participants studied where quantitative data is derived from the researcher's ideas about the categories and dimensions which should represent the central focus (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The literature that we use to focus our thesis on typically coincides with the above feature regarding qualitative research. In some cases it may be beneficial to add quantitative data to support the qualitative data however it is argued that statistics on social behavior can contain ambiguities, and hide social norms on which classifications are based (Prior, 1997).

We define our research as reflective research. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) characterize reflective research in two ways. Firstly, all references to empirical data are the results of interpretation. Interpretation becomes the forefront of research work which makes language and pre-understanding important as that is what determines interpretation (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000: 5). Secondly, reflection can be defined, in the context of empirical research, as the interpretation of interpretation and the launching of critical self-exploration of one's own interpretations of empirical material (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000: 6).

Thus what Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) suggest is that the research process involves us to construct the social reality of Alfa Laval in where we as the researchers interact with the employees that are being researched and actively interpreting and create images for ourselves and others which will eventually lead to claims as to how conditions and processes such as experiences, situations and relations can be understood.

With our qualitative research we wanted to find out how new recruits identify with, and socialize in corporations which are consciously working with their corporate image, and more specifically their values. Without putting the interviewees in a position in which they were

forced to answer questions, we tried to come to a conclusion on how new recruits work with these company values within their everyday life and if they specifically identify with them. Some interesting findings come out of these interviews, findings which we will present in a later stadium within this thesis, first in the results chapter and later on more elaborate in the analysis chapter.

3.2 SELECTION OF COMPANY AND EMPLOYEES

For this thesis we have chosen a single company to analyze for certain reasons. Firstly, Alfa Laval can be considered a KIF for reason explained later. Secondly, the headquarters are conveniently located in Lund Sweden which saves time in travelling to the company for each interview. The time constraints are important factors for us since the employees being interviewed have busy working schedules. The fact that we were able to arrange meetings with the interviewees in their own place of work made it also easier for them to allocate time to participate in our interview. Thirdly, choosing one company means that we can analyze the culture and values of the organization in more depth. A deeper understanding of the company's culture and values helped us understand and compare our results in a more effective manner for each participant that we interviewed. Finally, we are not comparing two organizations, the basis for our thesis are the results of employee's perceived organizational identity and how they compare to each other. Using one company and restricting the results only to the employees of Alfa Laval creates a more defined discussion and conclusion. A more detailed evaluation of the company can be found in the results and discussion.

Alfa Laval employee	Sex	Function	Period within Alfa Laval	Previous education	Previous work experience
Employee 1	M	Chemical engineer/product manager	2 years	Master degree in engineering	Teaching assistant LTH, R&D
Employee 2	M	Design Engineer	1,5 years	Bachelor Degree	Service technician, welder
Employee 3	F	Order Handler	3 months	Masters in engineering in biotechnology/industrial management and engineering	R&D
Employee 4	M	Consolidation controller	6 months	Masters in science business and administration	System administrator
Employee 5	F	Web and communication	7 months	Degree in Information and text design	Freelance journalist
Employee 6	F	Process Owner; recruitment	10 months	Economics	Finance controller, recruitment
Table 2: Background information of interviewees employed at Alfa Laval					

For this thesis we have selected a range of new employees within Alfa Laval. A list containing a random selection of new employees was given to us, with the help of human resources. We could not specifically choose the participants ourselves, i.e. depending on the department they came from or their job role. However the subjects were chosen by means of specifications previously established and discussed with our company liaison. These characteristics were as follows; employment less than 2 years, mixture of gender, knowledge workers (or at least graduates), people for whom this was the first work placement after their studies. Table 2 gives a brief outline of the personnel that was interviewed in Alfa Laval.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

To help answer the previously discussed research questions, we base our findings on following a number of propositions devised by Dutton et al. (1994), as explained in the theory section.

When conducting the interview it was important to make sure that the questions we asked will find the information required to link to each proposition. Developing the interview questions we needed to place ourselves in the position of the interviewee and ask ourselves how we would answer and react to the questions being asked.

It is important to keep in mind that we are exploring two different types of images, the organization's image and the individual employee's image. The interviews and observations, discussed in the following sections, helped us determine if there is any kind of link or barrier between the two theories discussed, and what effects they have on each other.

3.3.1 A VIEW INTO THE ORGANIZATIONS IMAGE THROUGH OBSERVATION

The researchers began observing a presentation about Alfa Laval's core values directed towards the sales force of the company. The observation is a step into finding not only the core values of the company but how the core values are portrayed to new staff coming into the company. Hereby it was possible to observe how a senior member of staff, who has had a fair amount of exposure to the core values of the company, relates and describes the values, and how the new staff, who have had very little exposure to the core values of the company, react when they are told the information.

The observation was conducted on the 11th of April 2008 at 16:00 and lasted for 1 hour. The presenter was Lars Wetterberg, Vice President of Human Resources for Alfa Laval for Western Europe and North America. The room is medium sized with four tables with around

5 to 6 people sitting at each. An unstructured approach to the observation was taken. Meaning there is no use of an observation schedule for recording any type of behavior. Instead narrative accounts of the behavior from the employees have been recorded. Another term for this unstructured observation is also non-participant observation (Bryman & Bell, 2003). All details such as information related to the company's core values which was presented on PowerPoint have been noted down as one part of the observation. The actions, behaviors and conversations were noted down as different part of the observation.

It is also important to realize the limitations of observations. We have to take into account the number of people and actions that are being observed. Data can become difficult to record if there are too many things that need to be observed. Employees may feel uncomfortable being observed which could cause an alteration in behavior. It can also be difficult gather data from employees which are mainly listening to the presentation and we cannot see what they are actually thinking, implying that a better understanding can only be achieved through discussion.

3.3.2 A VIEW INTO THE EMPLOYEES IMAGE THROUGH INTERVIEWING

As already indicated above, the chosen method to retrieve our data comes from primary sources, namely interviews. This qualitative means for retrieving our information is chosen in order to get a deeper and better understanding of the socialization process of new recruits. A qualitative approach is preferred over a quantitative approach since it provides the researcher with a concise understanding of the situation. Additionally it uncovers a greater depth than quantitative data, it attributes responses directly to the respondent, and it results a free exchange of information (less power relations or peer pressures in comparison to focus groups). Disadvantage might be that the results of the interview are highly dependent on the researchers qualities of conducting interviews and the data might be difficult to analyze and interpret in accordance with quantitative data (Malhotra, 1999). The interviews have been conducted in a semi-structured way. Semi-structured interviews are preferred over structured interviews since they provide a framework around which to talk, though not restricting the possibilities to elaborate into different opportunities.

However the limitations of interviews have also been incorporated. Firstly, seen from a social constructionist-perspective there is no one objective view to be discovered which the process of interviewing may bias (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002). There existed the risk of the interviewer using his own frame of reference, both by imposing a specific set of questions

or in the way in which the answers are interpreted. Thereby he or she could be seen as a co-producer of meaning within the interview setting.

Besides just the interviews also observations during the interview and observations of the interviewee in a broader social setting have been used. Observations are a necessity in order to establish whether the spoken word is in line with the actual interviewee's behavior, hence this gave a better insight in the interviewee's identity. Consequently increasing the validity and reliability of the data (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). More information will be discussed about the interview in the section interview design.

3.4 INTERVIEW DESIGN

The interview questions are designed around the propositions generated from Dutton et al. (1994), Polach (2004), Feldman (1976a), Jones (1986), and Ashforth and Saks (1997). This is done in order to facilitate our findings into both the member identification model as the socialization tactic model. As the interview consists of semi-structured questions we let the employee do most of the talking. The interview was conducted in English and once into a discussion we asked other questions related to the topic but not necessarily part of the original question. This is done in order to gain a deeper insight and understanding of what the employees were originally saying but at the same time we did not want to divert them into a different area of discussion that was not relevant to the thesis.

Before the interview started we had a general conversation with the employee about who we were, what the questions were about, how we would be recording the information, how their names would be kept anonymous and who was going to view the thesis.

The questions were divided into areas of discussion. We started out by asking the employee to give some general information about themselves which was a good way getting the employee comfortable with the setting. We then followed up with questions related to different areas of research. The first area involved asking questions mainly about their job, the second area involved questions about the company and the third area was related to themselves within the company. Once the interview was over we explained in more detail what the thesis was about, this was done only afterwards as we did not want to influence the answers from the employees at the beginning as this may have led them to give biased answers.

The interviews were conducted on site at Alfa Laval. The participating employee arranged a time and room that was convenient for them to do the interview. We met the employee in the reception where we were escorted to a room to conduct the interview.

To establish a link to our qualitative research method of conducting interviews and observations we discuss in the following sections the theory as to why this approach was taken.

3.5 RESEARCH EVALUATION

Since we are using qualitative research, we need to look at criteria for evaluating this research. There are a few ways of adapting certain criteria into the evaluation of our qualitative research which will be discussed from Bryman and Bell (2003).

3.5.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Although reliability and validity is directed towards quantitative research, it can also be adapted towards qualitative research. Firstly, external reliability is the degree in which a study can be replicated. It is however difficult to meet this criteria in qualitative research as it is impossible to 'freeze' a social setting and the circumstances of an initial study to make it replicable in the sense in which the term is usually employed (Bryman and Bell, 2003: 410). Secondly there is internal reliability which means that members of the research team agree about what is seen and heard.

Then there is internal validity where it is important that the researcher's observation matches the theory used to relate to the findings. Finally there is external validity where findings can be generalized across social settings.

3.5.2 ALTERNATIVE CRITERIA

There are alternative criteria, rather than just reliability and validity, which Bryman and Bell (2003) discuss for evaluating qualitative data. One such criterion is trustworthiness. There are four criteria that make up trustworthiness, they are credibility, transferability (both related to validity), dependability (related to reliability), and conformability (related to objectivity).

First Bryman and Bell (2003) discuss credibility. There can be several possible accounts of an aspect of social reality; hence it is the credibility of those accounts which the researcher will arrive at that determines the acceptability to others. The credibility of findings entails the assurance that the research is carried out in good practice and that any research findings are

submitted to members of the social world who were studied has confirmation that the investigator has correctly understood that social world. Since we had little time to submit any research findings directly to the interviewees we were not be able to fulfill a full respondent validation. We have however discussed after the interview if the subject matter and their answers were fully understood and whether they wanted to add anything more to the findings already discussed.

Before the interview started we also explained the reason behind the research questions and how the data has been collected would help assure the credibility. The research questions which were based around the propositions discussed in the literature review had to be well defined and understood to ensure accuracy and credibility. Since our interviews were semi-structured, we expected more of an in-depth conversation which gave us opportunities to ask supplementary questions. This helped increase the understanding of the questions and answers and enrich the data which was collected.

Transferability of the findings is also a factor which is important in conducting qualitative research. As qualitative researchers we are encouraged to produce a 'thick description' (Bryman and Bell 2003:413), which means providing detailed accounts of a culture. This 'think description' can provide others with a database for making judgments about the transferability of findings to other environments. The subjects that we interviewed come from a range of different departments within the Alfa Laval, each providing and image of the culture they work in. Since we are only limited to one company, which is in one area, the transferability of research will be limited to the departments of the head office.

Next there is dependability, this entails keeping a track of all the phases throughout the research process such as, problem formulation, research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions, etc. All interview participants will remain anonymous due to any sensitive information that may be revealed, however certain quotations from the transcripts of the interviews will be used in the analysis section of the thesis. During the thesis formulation a supervisor will also be monitoring the progress and the data within the thesis which will increase the reliability of the work. A copy of this thesis has been delivered to our liaisons within Alfa Laval.

Lastly conformability is discussed, which is concerned with the researcher acting in good faith and not allowing personal values or theoretical inclinations to sway to research and findings. These criteria would mainly be for those auditing the final thesis.

3.6 LIMITATIONS

This research merely focuses on the effect of socialization tactics and newcomers image on the identity formation and socialization within the firm. Still certain limitations are present with respect to this subject. First of all there is the focus of this research on only one firm operating in a very specific industry. This highly limits the generalization of the results to a broader aspect (Marsh & Stoker, 1995). Even though it has been tried to keep the focus within the firm as horizontal as possible still this generalization might be a problem for other research. Additionally the fact that Alfa Laval can be considered as a KIF enhance the generalization of the results.

Another limitation of this study is that the main source of information is primary data which is retrieved from in-depth interviews conducted with both new-recruits (less than two years working experience) at Alfa Laval, and also HR managers responsible for recruiting recent graduates. The fact that not the actual behavior has been researched can be seen as a limitation. Foremost since this could have been a valuable source for validating the statements made within the interviews. Argyris (1996) argues that there exists a discrepancy between theories (or actions), individuals espouse and the theories they use.

Additionally even though the qualitative nature of this research will be able to give us a richer idea of certain aspects of socialization and identity formation, still limitations exist with respect to this data retrieval method. First of all the relative connection between the different models touched upon in this research. Next there is the issue of validity which is hard to support with soft measures. This issue is tried to be overcome by giving a well outlined methodology section in which the underlying techniques used in this study to retrieve data relevant to the research question will be outlined (Marsh & Stoker, 1995).

The semi-structured way of doing the interview has the limitation that questions asked may be leading the answer as given by the interviewee. Also given the limited experience of the researchers in question, this is more likely to occur (Marsh & Stoker, 1995). This problem has however been tried to overcome by researching the methodology of previous research with respect to this subject. Furthermore, only questions have been asked when the interview seemed to be stuck or headed in the wrong direction. One should also remember that the new recruits were asked to remember their initial expectations and images of the firm. The given answer therefore could be lead by the tendency to be self-consistent (Wanous & Burack, 1982).

Not only the interview itself, also the analysis of the data is highly dependent on the subjectivity of the researchers itself; the researchers' bias. There is the possibility that interview results could be altered in a way which constitute the researchers ideologies or initial ideas (Marsh & Stoker, 1995). This problem has however been overcome by both analyzing the transcripts independently, there from stating our observations and generalizations of these texts.

3.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter we have described the manner through with we collected our data by means of using interviews, the reason for using qualitative data over quantitative data. We have also addressed that our data will be viewed in a reflexive manner. We have mentioned ways of how we evaluate the criteria of the data which we will use in the thesis. Finally a description of how the interviews are designed and the reason for the selection of the company and its employees have been discussed.

4 ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

The following section will give a thorough analysis of the findings of the conducted interviews and the observations are given. The chapter starts off with an introduction into Alfa Laval, the company used in this study to answer the proposed research questions. First of all basic figures are given after which a more thorough introduction into the business principles and corporate values are discussed.

In the later part of this chapter we take the models previously discussed to analyze the specific interview data. The analysis is based on the previously explained socialization tactics (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). Here merely the company's position in their strategy on socialization of these new recruits is discussed. Secondly we discuss the individuals' perspective by means of the model of member identification (Dutton et al., 1994), were we analyze propositions they set upon in this article. Lastly we try to link the member identification model with the company's socialization tactics to see if any discrepancies in perceptions or expectations occur in order to see how the socialization tactics influence the identification process and vice versa. As said before the models explained should not be seen as mutual exclusive but merely contributing to each other. However some discrepancies between the theories will also be discussed and explained. Also the more general findings as retrieved from the interviews will be discussed, being it more from the organizational perspective and the general findings the researchers made during the interviews and observations.

4.1 ALFA LAVAL: AN INTRODUCTION

Alfa Laval AB is founded in 1883 by Gustaf de Laval and Oscar Lamm Jr., and started operating under the name AB Separator, which was changed in 1963 to Alfa Laval AB. Currently Alfa Laval's corporate headquarters is established in Lund (Sweden), with an employee force of around 11,500 (2,275 in Sweden). Sales are made in more than a 100 countries, half of which come from Europe, 30% from Asia, Oceania and the Middle East, and about 20% in North- and South-Americas.

Nowadays Alfa Laval is working under the mission: "to optimize the performance of our customers' processes, Time and time again." meaning that they are continuously trying to improve the performance of their customers' processes. This mission statement has changed in 1998, after Alfa Laval changed their business concept from being highly product oriented

(three key technologies; Separation, Heat transfer, and Fluid handling), towards a more customer-oriented organization. A change necessary due to the changing market, and because Alfa Laval was losing ground in the markets it was operating on.

This change has appeared to be successful. Net have increased with 25% in comparison from 2006 to 2007 (19,802 MSEK, 27,553 MSEK resp.), with an increased operating income of 4,980 MSEK (+65%). Additionally earnings per share have increased significantly over the last couple of years (+89% over 2007). This makes it the market leader in its three basic technologies; heat exchangers, separators and fluid handling equipment (Alfa Laval AB annual report, 2007).

4.1.1 THE BUSINESS CONCEPT / STRATEGY

> *"Alfa Laval's business concept is to optimize performance in customers' processes. Each person in the company must contribute with results so that Alfa Laval continually develops. This involves delivering results. There is a strong desire within Alfa Laval to attain the established goals, both large and small. This is and must be a driving force for all employees. The attainment of financial goals is the final confirmation of the company's success." (Alfa Laval annual report 2007, p. 6)*

Alfa Laval's business concept is build three main indicators; strategy, operations and financial goals. Through which added value for both customers and shareholders should be created. These pillars are only guidelines and strategies by which Alfa Laval tries to create an advantage

Figure 3: Alfa Laval's Business Concept
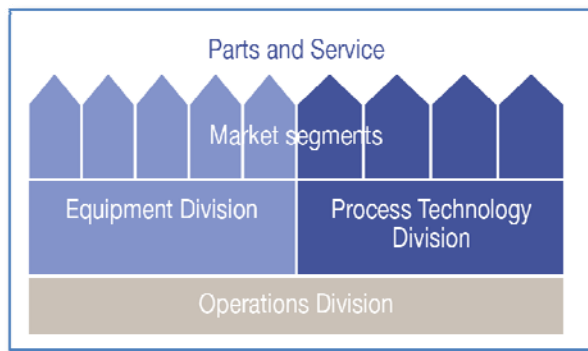
over its competitors. In itself these pillars are only hollow indicators of what Alfa Laval actually stands for. Some more specific goals as retrieved from their annual report are:

- ✓ Higher growth than its competitors, with favorable profitability
- ✓ Strengthen market position through acquisition
- ✓ Provide continuous added value by improving internal as well as customers' processes

In order to achieve these goals the company is separated into three divisions and nine segments which resemble Alfa Laval main consumer segments. These segments are divided into two sales divisions: Process Technology and the Equipment division. After sales services is provided by the division Parts and Services. The last division is the operations division, which deals with logistics, procurement, and manufacturing (Alfa Laval annual report, 2007).

4.1.2 THE BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

Alfa Laval seems to attach significant attention towards following their business principles. As they state in their conduct of Business Principles (2008): "Together with our Core Values they define the way we should act and therefore be trusted by all members of society." Next a main introduction into Alfa Laval's business principles will be given, after which the underlying core values, which are a main part in this thesis are discussed.

Alfa Laval operates under four main business principles, which have been an integral part of Alfa Laval's culture for many years.

- ✓ Environment: "optimizing the use of natural resources in an efficient manner."
- ✓ Social: "Respect for human rights is fundamental"
- ✓ Business Integrity: "High ethical standards guide our conduct"
- ✓ Transparency: "Our commitment to open dialogue builds trust"

These principles seem not be solely statements through which it tries to establish a better image towards the outside world. Alfa Laval has been working actively with these principles. The environmental aspect has been addressed in that Alfa Laval develops new technologies by which try to reduce waste water and carbon dioxide emissions. Socially Alfa Laval is constantly enhancing and improving work standards for their employees, hence also complying to their suppliers with Alfa Laval's standards which should overcome social and ethical dilemmas.

> *"Respect for human rights is fundamental. Alfa Laval respects the human rights of its employee as well as the societies in which they live and work."*
> *(Alfa Laval annual report, 2007)*

The former also applies to the principles of business integrity and transparency. Business integrity is established through legal compliance, avoidance of conflict of interest, and avoid political interests. Transparency plays a key role in this as such that it provides stakeholders with the essential (though not commercial relevant information) to comply with the other stated business principles.

> *"Alfa Laval will pursue its business in an honest manner with high integrity and respect for others." (Alfa Laval annual report, 2007)*

4.1.3 CORE VALUES

In 2007 Alfa Laval developed a new program called 'Pure Performance', in which is explained how Alfa Laval must adjust its core values to cope with new requirements. The main focus is on the employees, which need to concentrate on the main values hereby avoiding the unnecessary activities associated with fast growing companies (Alfa Laval annual report, 2007). These pivotal values, on which the employees should concentrate, are:

- ✓ Action: be alert, act now!
- ✓ Courage: have the courage to change!
- ✓ Teamwork: think flexible!
- ✓ Profit: Look at the bottom line!

These four core values are set about through a series of strategies. First of all there is the enhancement of internal recruitment by using established intranet facilities. Secondly there is the evaluation of managers by means of these core values. On the recruitment side, which is especially vital for this thesis, Alfa Laval has been trying to focus on what they call the 'Vital Few' through which development of the skills necessary for company success are established. In this training is of significant importance, as such that it should be directed towards the organizations needs and values.

4.1.4 CONCLUSION

One should keep in mind that the above information is merely retrieved from information brochures and the annual report provided by Alfa Laval. The information could therefore seem to be better portrayed and more addressed than is actually occurring. Therefore we will present you in the next section with our own interpretation of the observation and interviews we conducted merely with respect to the core values, and in a lesser extent with respect to the

business principles. The reason for this is that these two concepts play a significant role in our thesis, and contribute to a better understanding of the company.

4.2 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

In this section a more thorough analysis of the previously presented frameworks is given. Starting off by analyzing the data by means of van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization tactics model, and consequently using Dutton et al.'s (1994) member identification model.

4.2.1 PERCEPTION OF ALFA LAVAL'S SOCIALIZATION TACTICS

In the literature review already some reflection on organizational socialization has been given. In this chapter we try to link these discussed theories to reflect on the socialization process within Alfa Laval but more specifically the tactics used by Alfa Laval as discussed by van Maanen and Schein (1977). These specify the linkage between socialization variables and resulting responses. The tactics within Alfa Laval will be analyzed by means of the six tactics as discussed by van Maanen and Schein (1977), and Jones (1986).

CONTEXT BASED TACTICS

Collective vs. Individual socialization

This tactic is defined by the practice of grouping newcomers and putting them through a common set of experiences in contrast to treating each newcomer independently and letting him experience more or less unique experiences. Our findings with respect to this aspect of the socialization process are rather two folded. There appears to be an intention to deal with the socialization in a more collective manner, as such that everybody is assigned a mentor. Nonetheless in real life not everybody is assigned one, or is only able to make use of it moderately. It seems as such that the newcomers had to find their own way to get acquainted to the company in a lot of different instances. This is also implied by the following example:

> *"My tutor's wife was pregnant, so he told me that he was dependent on me when he was going home, which could be any day now. So I had the Friday and the Monday and on Tuesday he told me he wouldn't be there the whole day […] so in the afternoon it was me and all of my tutors work." (Interviewee 3)*

But also the perception of the newcomers was that there exists no collective socialization strategy. Something which also seems unnecessary, there socialization seems to occur due to the open communication within the firm, and the way in which new employees are accepted within the organization:

"I would say that I at least had to find my own path in the company, I didn't officially have a mentor. I kind of have this person who I turn to if I need help; he is kind off our trouble shooter. The closest thing to a mentor would be him. […] My team is very open and informal […] when I have to know something I stand up…the communication is everything." (Interviewee 1)

This individual approach implies according to van Maanen and Schein (1977) that newcomers decide to change their roles and their missions in accordance to their own perceptions, whereas the more collective approach would have implied a confirmation of the status quo in the organization. This seems however to be true in this respective organization, which could imply that other forces constituted the confirmation of the status quo which is occurring within Alfa Laval.

Formal vs. Informal socialization

This tactics deals with the context in which information is presented to newcomers. With formal tactics the organization separates the newcomers from the other organizational members while they are adjusted to their roles within the organization (Jones, 1986). The results from the interviews showed that the tactic Alfa Laval is using are merely informal. Newcomers are introduced into the team which they will be working in.

Researcher: *"Did you get in contact with other newcomers?"*

"No, I had no clue who they were […] I was pretty busy getting to know the place and the people." (Interviewee 2)

This is also how they are trained. They are assigned a mentor within that team, a person who has the knowledge on what the job exactly constitutes, and from here the newcomers are encouraged to ask around and to find out which people they need to ask which questions to.

Researcher: *"Did you have problems in the beginning to ask people for help?"*

"No I don't think so, because everybody was clear from the beginning that if I had any questions I should ask […] if it doesn't take long to get to know the people around you, then it is an easier task."(Interviewee 4)

Above thus implies the highly informal tactic which is present within Alfa Laval. They get acquainted to the organization and the team they are working with by actively working with this team. The open communication system at Alfa Laval only seems to support this informal way of socializing new recruits into the organization. The results from this informal approach,

according to Jones (1986) is that informal and individual tactics provide newcomers with great latitude to make differentiated responses, of which innovative behavior is a likely result. Something which is also constituted by the socialization 'strategy' as occurring within Alfa Laval.

CONTENT BASED TACTICS

Sequential & Fixed vs. Random & Variable tactic

Sequential tactics provide recruits with a specific set of activities and experiences which they will go through in the organization. Fixed tactics means that there is a fixed program which newcomers have to attend in their introduction period (Saks & Ashforth, 1997). This is obviously not the case in Alfa Laval, there seems to be a more random and variable tactic for adjusting newcomers to the organization. A tactic which should increase the uncertainty related to the newcomers organizational futures.

> **Researcher**: *Have you been given some form of training us such when you started or working with other new entrants that just started working with the company?*

> *"…it was actually quite vague, but it was two months after I joined the company, they had 4 half days for new employees where they had information almost about everything and we went all around looking in the industries…"* *(Interviewee 5)*

> *"No, I did not…" (Interviewee 3)*

So people are hardly given any introduction into the company. Most interviewees said that they accustomed to the company by means of their teams, and that no formal program was established for them. There were however some things the new recruits had to go through. This was a tour through the company, to get to know the industries. This was however minimal, and there was definitely no set time schedule to which the newcomers could hold on to.

TACTICS' SOCIAL ASPECTS

Serial & Investiture vs. Disjunctive & Divestiture

The last two categories of socialization are the serial vs. disjunctive and investiture vs. divestiture socialization. The former stands in which experienced organization members act as

a role model for the new recruits, whereas the disjunctive process must develop their own definitions of situations because no other or prior role incumbents are available (Jones, 1986).

Within Alfa Laval one can definitely speak of a serial approach towards socialization, or at least there is the intention to approach socialization in this way. Already in the first stages of the recruitment process the potential mentor is included. The reason for this is to identify whether there is a connection between the recruit and the team in which they are about to be started. The recruits should be assigned a personal mentor, to whom they can relate and talk to. Even though not everybody was assigned a mentor, due to several reasons, the intention that a mentor should be assigned was present and most often occurred.

> *"…for group finance the new recruits get a mentor, so one person is assigned to help you, and that helps a lot I think, because it is a person that you can go to and ask things. They know where everybody is and what you are supposed to do." (Interviewee 4).*

> *"I have a mentor of course, or rather the guy I ask and it is him and me that are in charge of the product care…" (Interviewee 2).*

So it is the general conception that mentors should be assigned to new recruits. This was also what the company policy constituted, as derived from the interview with the recruitment managers:

> *"…it is supposed that you are going to have some kind of mentor near you because the recruiting manager may not be here […] so I think that is important to have…" (Interviewee 6)*

The investiture/divestiture tactic is related to the amount of positive or negative social support after the entry from other more experienced organizational members. This feedback may more strongly influence newcomers' perceptions of contexts than do objective characteristics of contexts.

Within Alfa Laval one can definitely speak of a more investiture organizational social context. New recruits are helped in their job, they are encouraged to ask questions, but more importantly most of them are accepted by their fellow team-members. This is obvious in the following examples:

> *"My boss kind off does that. He has this way of saying: 'Good job, but you can*

> *always do better' (laughs). I don't know if people do it everywhere, but he does that from time to time."(Interviewee 1)*

This way of encouraging new recruits is also constituted from the existing open communication culture. People are encouraged to ask if they have questions, and that does not seem to be a burden by more experienced employees. As is shown in the following example:

> *"We have our different expertise all of us, so it is very easy to trade information and all of this. So I was very comfortable with that in the beginning. I didn't feel like I was intruding or anything, I really felt like they had time for me and so." (Interviewee 1)*

This investiture behavior leads to a more encouraging surrounding in which it is more likely for new recruits to excel in their roles, or at least feel more satisfied and confident in their jobs.

CONCLUSION

Van Maanen and Schein (1977) argued that different combination of tactics lead to different role orientations (innovative vs. custodial orientations). However to draw this conclusion we have to look more closely into the individual identity formation of the different new recruits, in order to see which behavior the divergent socialization tactics at Alfa Laval bring about. This will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, in which the member identification of new recruits within Alfa Laval will be discussed. As from the above analysis and the given literature it can be expected that members will have a more innovative role orientation, since most tactics are more oriented towards the individual side of the continuum. Moreover the link between the organizational and individual perspective will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

4.2.2 PERCEIVED MEMBER IDENTIFICATION WITHIN ALFA LAVAL

As discussed before Dutton et al. (1994) came up with certain propositions which tried to help identifying the person's identification level with respect to this person's image of the organization. An attractive organizational identity strengthens a member's identification. In the following section these propositions are discussed with exception of the consequences of organizational identification, this for the fact that these propositions dealt more with the study of new recruits' behaviors, which was irrelevant to our proposed research question. Therefore Dutton et al.'s (1994) model is adjusted as follows:
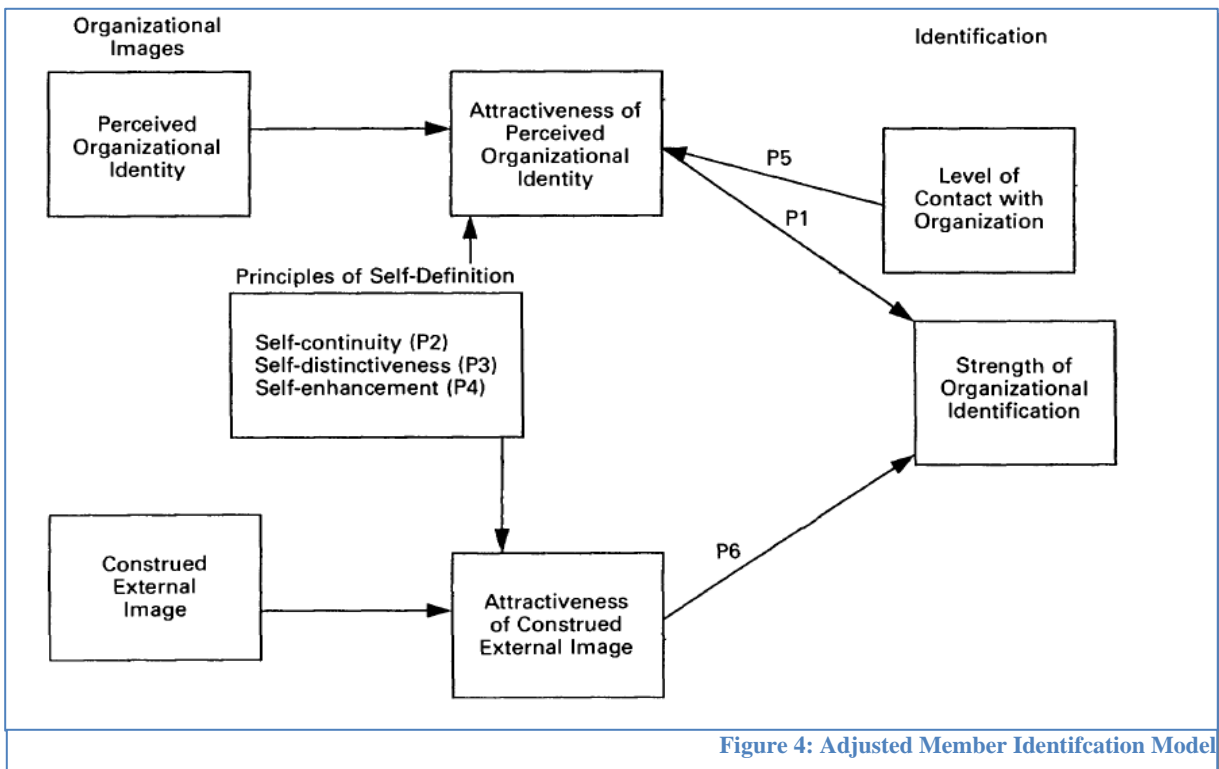
Figure 4: Adjusted Member Identifcation Model

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION AT ALFA LAVAL

> *"I think all the people I met during the interviews are nice and I could connect*
> *to them somehow…" (Interviewee 4)*

This part constitutes what the individuals believe makes the attractiveness of their perceived organizational identity (P1). First of all we take apart the definition of strong organizational identification as perceived by the individuals. This definition as proposed by Dutton et al. (1994) is the degree to which a member defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization.

From the interviews and observations conducted there definitely occurs a significant degree of attraction of the new recruits towards Alfa Laval's perceived identity. When asked the question what attracted them to Alfa Laval in the first place, especially the multinational nature of the company comes about. This also constitutes working with different cultures and people throughout the whole world which was an important factor for them to start working with Alfa Laval. Of course in itself this is not an unusual finding; however this together with the local appeal Alfa Laval still seems to possess works very hard on the new entrant's identification with the company. As one of the new recruits stated in the interview on the question what Alfa Laval meant for them, and what their idea was about the company:

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"...quality, expertise, personal development, worldwide company, multicultural and all that." (Interviewee 1)

"You can do a lot of different things, there are a million of opportunities within Alfa Laval, and you have the opportunity to go abroad..." (Interviewee 2)

"...I think it is the international feeling and the possibility to move within the company..." (Interviewee 6)

In the interviews several other confirmations for the attractiveness of the perceived self-defined organizational identity have been found. These findings can be differentiated into three different categories; self-continuity, self-distinctiveness, and self-enhancement.

Members Self-Continuity

People generally want to maintain their continuity of their self-concepts over time and across situations (Steele, 1988). First of all, people match their personal identity with organizational identity better when it matches the own sense of self, because this enhances the way in which information is processed and understood. Secondly positive correlation between these two concepts provides the individual to express themselves better. Also at Alfa Laval this seems to be occurring, which provides and explanation for the interview process discussed earlier. The interviewees expressed this self-continuity as follows:

"For me it is place where I can be myself completely. I can be very loud and laugh a lot, and I am doing that. And sometimes I remind myself; Johanna, close the door because everyone can hear you. But I really feel that it is accepted and appreciated that I got in the group. It is appreciated to be yourself and be happy, that is very important, you need to be yourself and have a good time. And I really do." (Interviewee 3).

But also from other perspectives this self-continuity can be identified. A person doing an engineering education is more likely to go and work for Alfa Laval in comparison to Ernst & Young for example. However this ways they can express more with the characteristics they value for themselves.

"...the direction I went in my University was process design which has a lot of process equipment and Alfa Laval is biggest on Heat exchangers, separators, so you hear a lot of it during school. So by the time I did my thesis, I wanted to do it at Alfa Laval, so I applied here and I got here..." (Interviewee 1)

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However simply stating that there is a link between the members and organizations identity is not sufficient. There needs to be a certain kind of consistency in these behaviors and attitudes towards the organizational identity that enhances the identification process and see it as a recursive process. Members who believe the organization is similar to them strengthen the self-association already in place before they became organizational members (Dutton et al., 1994). From the interviews this comes about in the following way:

> *"...they just let me go for it, so I think the culture is very open minded and friendly..." The consistency shows later when she confirms this as being important to her own "...for me it was the colleagues. I like the way that I could come up to the group management and are able to talk to them in a natural way. It is open..." (Interviewee 6)*

> *"...the impression I have when meeting different people in different locations, here... that most of them seem very helpful, friendly, open..." And when stating his personal preferences in the job: "I think...to be able to work with nice people..." (Interviewee 4)*

> *Also being open and social, having contact with people. That is pretty important, if I wasn't able to ask questions to people around me I wouldn't know anything. Socially aware thinking. (Interviewee 1)*

As appears from the above results it shows that congruence between the self-continuity and the organizational identity enhance the identification process of the new recruits. However it is hard to retrieve comparison material from these interviews as such that all interviewees seem to meet their comfort within the company. Therefore it is hard to identity results of incongruence and organizations (dis)identification.

Members Self-Distinctiveness

Social identity theory state that people put an emphasis on their own distinctiveness in a interpersonal context (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Additionally stating that the distinctiveness of the group's values and practices in relation to those of comparable groups increase the members' tendency to identify with the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989: 24). Identification which seems to be enhanced by organizations with distinctive cultures, strategies, structures, or some distinctive characteristic are likely to experience a stronger identification. This was also discussed in chapter 2. However, in our interviews we found rather contradicting results concerning this matter. First of all, some new recruits found it

merely hard to pinpoint the organizational values or even the distinctiveness of the organizational culture. This part is additionally hard to compare for new recruits, since Alfa Laval is for most of them the first employer, meaning that it is difficult to retrieve comparison material which can explain the distinctiveness of Alfa Laval's norms, values and culture by these new members. What there is to compare for us, however is how the HR manager described the organizational norms, values and culture as a distinctive set in comparison to the new recruits' perceptions.

> *"...don't know really...it's an open working culture, but working culture is a bit tricky to describe." (Interviewee 4)*

However some people found distinctiveness in the organizational culture as such that they try to describe the culture when confronted with a direct question on what Alfa Laval actually stands for.

> *"I find the place quite open, it is pretty flat. I mean everyone is, or no one is running around with their noses up in the air, or looking down at people. It is quite open..." (Interviewee 2)*

> *"I think I had this idea before as well. I saw it was a good, and a good working environment, physically and mentally, and this is kind of confirmed when I started working here." (Interviewee 1)*

So from this it can be derived that even though it might be hard to establish Alfa Laval's distinctive culture with respect to other employers. It is still relatively easy for new recruits to adhere the main characteristics of what, according to them, is the corporate culture, or at least what the culture is consistent of.

Not only the general perceived organizational culture seems to be important, also certain strategies with respect to their social responsibility seem to address the identification of new employees with Alfa Laval. Backhaus, Stone and Heiner (2002) concluded that environment, community relations, and diversity dimensions have the largest affect on employer attractiveness ratings. The fact that Alfa Laval is quite distinctively working with the environment, and states it as one of their business principles has also not gone unnoticed by the new recruits. More specifically they seem to develop a high affection towards this environmental friendly strategy. Stating:

> *"At the moment we are working a lot with the environment and nature, at least*

we are trying to say that our products are helping people in their daily jobs and daily situations, before it was all about the products but now we are trying to get the connection what the machines do for the people and that is what I am more interested in..." (Interviewee 5)

"For me it was a good company, i.e. working with environment, the way they are trying to change and go with what is happening in the world in a good way." (Interviewee 6)

So it really seems like the new entrants values the distinctiveness of the business principles. Hereby a positive association with the firm is occurring and thereby it increases the identification with Alfa Laval.

Members Self-Enhancement

Self-esteem seems to be enhanced when members can associated with organization that have attractive perceived identity (Saks & Ashforth, 2000). This self-enhancement seems to occur due to the open nature of communication within Alfa Laval. Some of the new entrants seem to be less confident upon their employment, however this open communication within Alfa Laval made them more secure about their job.

"You need to get in contact with a lot of people, you need to get to know them, and discuss with them, and need to say what goes or doesn't go. You need to have some 'cohonna's', be willing to take chances. Sometimes when you are uncertain just say no instead of crawling back and say yes." (Interviewee 2)

The open and informal communication also set about in the appraisal of work performance. This appraisal for most new recruits is not shown through raise in salary or other fringe benefits, merely for the fact they have not been employed long enough. Appraisal however is shown by means of simple e-mail or tap on the shoulder of the new employees, which is constituted from the open communication existent.

What do they do if you reach your goals? Are you congratulated, or encouraged?

"I can only speak for my boss and he kind of does that. He has this way of saying: "Good job, but you can always do better"

Does that help your self-esteem?

> *"Of course! Otherwise you always sit and wonder...now I feel really good. So that is positive." (Interviewee 1)*

As can be seen from both passages in the above section it is obvious that the more the employee takes on the attribute of Alfa Laval identity by defining themselves as being appraised for their performance, the more attractive Alfa Laval's perceived identity will look. But also the more confident they seem to be getting in performing their daily job.

> *"...and also one of the things I like the most is to have this interaction with so many people. I must say that the work I am doing is appreciated by the people that I'm doing it for and they actually do use the models that I developed." (Interviewee 4)*

Level of Contact

Also level of contact with the organization is identified as having an impact on the attractiveness of perceived organizational identity. Stern (1988) found that members are more and more exposed to the totems and symbols that remind them of their union with the organization. Dutton et al. (1994: 248) put this in the following proposition; "the more contact a member has with an organization, the greater the attractiveness of the perceived organizational identity and the stronger the organizational identification." This proposition is however irrelevant for the research that we are doing, since it is focused on the new recruits within Alfa Laval, meaning that their exposure to the firm is rather limited through which no direct proofs of this propositions are to be found in our primary data.

CONSTRUED EXTERNAL ON IDENTIFICATION OF ALFA LAVAL'S NEW RECRUITS

Dutton et al. (1994) defined the construed organizational image as the members assumption of the image that organizations 'others' form of the organization. Additionally members construe the external image as positive when they believe it possesses elements valued by peers, or close affiliates.

> *"With projects the projects from Alfa Laval are always most wanted. People think we need to be in that group and that could be fun. They have always been very helpful with the school and they interact a lot with the school. I think that is helping them to show themselves as well, and helping them with the positive image you got from Alfa Laval." (Interviewee 3)*

From this quote it seems that the interviewee thinks generally for the 'outsiders' as well, constructing the view that Alfa Laval is a highly appreciated company with, in this case, respect to university work. Nonetheless also other member's assumptions of 'outsiders' views came about in the interviews. One such example is:

> *"...when I talk with my friends I can talk about the company like; "did you hear about our shares are up and did you hear about us in the newspaper", and I start to feel proud for the company and start to feel that what I actually do matters for the company and that is good, it's a good feeling. Because also this being my first job I didn't think I would develop those feelings. And also this company is well known so my friends are impressed I think and when they come and pick me up, they see the building and they are impressed as well, I think they have the feeling I had when I went for the interview!" (Interviewee 5)*

This feeling also seems to be reflected in how the new-recruits associate towards the outside world with Alfa Laval. All the interviewee's stated they worked with a certain pride in the company, and most of them also reflected this towards the outside world, including the researchers. It deemed that the employees used the status Alfa Laval possesses within Sweden, and more likely with the area of Lund, to confirm their association with this company. Additionally the fact that the company has been around for a very long time seems to be something the 'insiders' perceive for 'outsiders' to be important. For example:

> *"...this is just one of the Swedish companies that has been around for such a long time, so I mean in that way they are always attractive to work for!"(Interviewee 4)*

It seems like the established image Alfa Laval possesses is a very important attribute for new-recruits to identify with both inside, but foremost outside the company.

> *"Somebody who is dealing with industrial design, well industry anywhere, knows about Alfa Laval. They should be on their shortlist." (Interviewee 1)*

From this quote it can quite clearly be derived that Alfa Laval's image is quite strongly and positively perceived within the technological educational area. The image of Alfa Laval, especially here in Lund seems to be perceived a large international company with a long lasting reputation.

However outside the technological educational area in which most of our interviewees have resided no strong external affiliation towards Alfa Laval exists. The construed external image for new recruits within Alfa Laval plays therefore only a small part in strengthening organizational identification. This can be explained by the fact that Alfa Laval is merely operating in a B-2-B market from which a large amount of consumers do not know what Alfa Laval's products actually deliver. On the other hand it became obvious during the interviews that Alfa Laval is perceived to be a big company within Sweden, and something which one should be proud of to work for.

4.3 GENERAL RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

In this chapter we give a general overview of our findings on the company; its values, employees, and the perceived working environment. This part solely tries to give an initial insight into the company from the researcher's perspective.

4.3.1 IDENTITY FORMATION: CORE OR PERCEIVED VALUES?

As can be seen from the above given case analysis is that Alfa Laval is consciously working with their business principles and since 2007 also with their core values, as was proven by the program 'Pure Performance'. This program however seems not to have fully integrated within the company. The only time when this program did come up during our contact with the organization was in the presentation given to the new sales people. Here the question was asked if they knew about the program, and the response was rather limited. The core values seem thus not to be as embedded in organizational members as was implied by their annual report. This was also evident from the interviews, nobody could specifically state the core values, or the business principles according to which they should behave.

What was retrieved from the interviews was that, even though there was a lack of knowledge, and thereby identification with the core values, there is still an existing uniform identity within the new recruits. A uniform identity which was established by what the interviewees perceived to be the organizational values. These perceived values as analyzed by the new recruits can be categorized as follows, which will be further elaborated upon in the analysis:

- ✓ The open, friendly and informal communication
- ✓ Future outlook (possibility to move throughout the organization)
- ✓ Different work directions
- ✓ International orientation

What was additionally retrieved from the interviews and the observations is that the newcomers show a type of pride with the company. They are really enthusiastic about Alfa Laval and their job, but also about the teams they work in. Our perception is that Alfa Laval is like a warm blanket for its employees, providing it with a very social environment where everybody can be themselves. This is additionally set about in the fact that employees, when asked, want to stay with the company for quite some time; they have the possibility to move throughout the company, and they explore a lot of different areas within the company.

Concluding one could say that Alfa Laval appears to be the ideal employer for the new recruits we interviewed. Newcomers seem to be feeling well at home within the company, and also identified with what later will show to be the perceived organizational values. From first instance it thus seemed that Alfa Laval's core values constituted this identity. The previously discussed analysis showed a different outcome.

4.3.2 SOCIALIZATION PROCESS AT ALFA LAVAL

The findings we retrieved from the organization and more specific the managers with respect to the socialization process indicate, for the researchers at least, that there does not exist a clear socialization strategy as described by means of van Maanen and Schein's (1977) socialization tactics. However some trends within the process could be identified, some trends which could better be assigned to current research on socialization.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

First of all there was the recruitment process in itself. These seemed to be approached from a rather institutionalized orientation. Almost all recruits had several interviews before they got assigned the job. The first step is that the candidate has an interview with a manager of the respective department and one of the employees. When recruits pass this round they have to conduct a personality test, which is evaluated afterwards by a HR manager and the recruit. Here additional remarks, but also explanations of the results can be given by the candidate. The final round consists of an interview with the team manager and additionally members of the future team.

This seems to be the general procedure, though some deviating processes also occurred. One of interviewees indicated that they were introduced and shown around their future department even before they got accepted. Some other recruits had to present a short case in front of their future team. All recruits indicated however that they had informal discussion with the

manager before the initial interview in order to establish a personal and comfortable bond with the recruits.

AFTER EMPLOYMENT

Upon employment new recruits were introduced to their fellow coworkers. They also got assigned a mentor, which most of them already met during the interviews. Next the recruits got a general introduction into their job by the mentor and they were slowly given more tasks to perform with support from their mentor. It was however expected that the new recruits should show initiative in solving the tasks at hand. This means either by asking their mentor, or as also often occurred by means of their coworkers. Most of the interviewees also got a tour throughout the company through which they were showed what the company is actually doing. Hereby they also met people around the organization which could be of use for their future job.

In a later stadium social events were initiated for the teams (this was thus not specifically oriented towards new recruits). However not all the subjects were actively participating in these events, or they had not been employed long enough to participate in them.

So even though some socialization strategies were initiated by the company, it became more clear that new recruits had to show their own initiative in order to find their way into the organization. It showed high correlation with what was discussed in the literature review as proactive socialization; meaning that newcomers actively work to reduce their uncertainty associated with the employment through their own initiative.

The socialization process of Alfa Laval is thus difficult to depict to either an individualized or institutionalized socialization tactic. This does however not mean that there exists no socialization process within Alfa Laval. The management on the one hand and the corporate culture on the other, provide new entrants with the tools necessary to socialize into the company. New recruits are assigned a mentor through whom they can retrieve initial information to confirm their job role. The corporate culture on the other hand is the supplier of the openness and friendliness necessary for such as strategy to work. It could thus be said that the proactive socialization within Alfa Laval would be heavily inefficient if it were not for the established corporate culture in which this proactiveness is stimulated, proactiveness based on the fact that the new recruits can be themselves and act alike their own identity. An argument could hence be made on the fact if it is the socialization process which enhances the identification or if it is the established culture as such which is the driver behind member

identification. Furthermore the notion should be made if we can actively speak of identification when an organization, such as Alfa Laval, meets up with individuals' identities and not vice versa. These questions will though be questioned later on in this thesis, when we derive to the conclusion.

The next chapter deals with the analysis of the results and the interview data. These are analyzed by means of the previously discussed models by first of all van Maanen and Schein (1977), and secondly Dutton et al. (1994).

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter will give a further insight and reflection on the themes elaborated upon in the previous chapter. Past research on the area of organizational socialization implied different outcomes for different socialization tactics. Jones (1986) identified that some socialization tactics are more strongly related to newcomers adjustment in relation to other tactics. Social tactics preceded the context and content tactics (Table 1: p. 8). Additionally important findings in past socialization literature proved that institutionalized tactics lead to a more custodial role orientation whereas individualized socialization leads to a more innovative role orientation (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007). Our findings correspond but also contradict findings in past literature in this area.

5.1.1 SOCIALIZATION AND IDENTIFICATION: CONSTITUTING CONCEPTS?

As said in the above paragraph it is believed that certain socialization tactics enhance the organizational status quo with respect to newcomer identification in institutionalized socialization. The contradicting part of the continuum is that individualized socialization leads to innovative role orientation, meaning that newcomers defy the organizational status quo.

The findings from our research however contradict some of these perceptions presented in existing socialization theory, especially on the side of the socialization tactics presented earlier by van Maanen and Schein (1977). Our results suggest that socialization tactics do not necessarily result in a stronger identification with the organization; hence also other factors influence the socialization process. In Alfa Laval there seems to be an undefined path for the majority of newcomers in the way in which they are to be trained and acquainted to the organization and its employees. From the analysis it can be read that there is no single socialization orientation which exists, as such that there is a mixture between individualized and institutionalized socialization tactics. According to Jones (1986) this could result in confusion in newcomers orientation within the organization, confusion which was not found after conducting the interviews in this research.

Within Alfa Laval the finding is that there exists both an individualized as institutionalized form of socialization, nonetheless leading to a collective identification of newcomers into the organization. This was proven by the fact that most interviewees had the identified highly with the perceived organizational values, when comparing what they found important in a job

and what they thought Alfa Laval stands for. This seems rather contradicting with the results from past socialization research arguing in the strain of van Maanen and Schein (1977) and Jones (1986). Possible explanations for this finding can be that these past researches have been merely conducted in a quantitative manner, thereby disassociating it with the merits qualitative research has. As discussed before, van Maanen and Schein (1977) put innovative and custodial role behavior as perfect opposites in their socialization tactics model; this was also used as a basis for the underlying *quantitative* analysis in later research. However as has been proven by Saks et al. (2007), these two do not necessarily have to be opposing, but can also be constituting factors. Something which was also proven in this thesis. Furthermore this model has been developed for three decades ago, which limits these research findings for today's business. As Schein (1996) implied the stereotypic notion of the one-organization career is fading, whereas organization put less effort on the centralized socialization and training programs, more focusing on task-centered opportunities for learning. Additionally Saks et al. (2007) found that organizations not necessarily have to chose between socializing newcomers for strong job attachment or for innovative role orientation. An organization might use institutionalized socialization tactics for strong job attachment, and on the other hand use the context and content tactics to enhance innovative behavior, hereby making use of the benefits of both tactics. Through this proactive socialization should become more apparent for newcomers and organizations (Saks & Ashforth, 1997).

This recent adaptation towards current trends in socialization research based on the model by van Maanen and Schein (1977) limits us to completely abandon this model. It is still the underlying model for new concepts such as proactive socialization. Also because the existing models on socialization should not be seen as mutual exclusive or contradicting, they are based on each other and represent different perspectives on socialization. Proactive socialization is one of these concepts derived from the socialization tactic model, which explains the recent changes in organizational socialization tactics. In the following section additional reasoning why these past findings are difficult to associated to Alfa Laval are given, contributing it with this more recent research and of course our personal findings.

PROACTIVE SOCIALIZATION VS. CORPORATE CULTURE AS A SOCIALIZER

The structure through which Alfa Laval tries to create positive member identification is not reached by any of the socialization tactics defined by van Maanen and Schein (1977). Member identification is reached by what is in later research identified as proactive socialization. Which regards newcomers as agents who actively work to reduce uncertainty in

their work environments (Feij et al., 1995; Morrison, 1993). This is constituted throughout networking, general socializing, building relationships with one's boss, negotiate job change, positive framing, and information seeking (Ashford & Black, 1996).

We would like to suggest that the positive newcomer's identification with Alfa Laval is partially explained by the concept of proactive socialization. The newcomers are introduced in an environment in which they are actively stimulated to find their way into the organization. Networking and general socializing are important factors in this. Additionally the fact that the boss is most of the times also the mentor of these new recruits enhances the proactive way in which the newcomers are behaving. Another form of proactive socialization that we found in Alfa Laval is that newcomers have the opportunities to enhance their careers by following different career paths, if they wish to. Something also heavily encouraged by Alfa Laval through their internal recruitment system.

This system of proactive socialization would not work without the backbone of the open and informal culture which supports this proactive way of socializing. Newcomers are supported by their peers, and more experienced organizational members in their search to adjust to Alfa Laval. All of the employees said that they were encouraged to ask question especially in the beginning of their employment, thereby reducing the uncertainty associated with a new job. Thus the proactive socialization would not work on itself, meaning that it needs to be backed up by an organizational culture which constitutes this path of socialization. It could thus be argued that organizational culture (i.e. Alfa Laval's informal atmosphere) and the new recruit's identity act reciprocally with the proactive socialization process as a catalyst. New recruits are encouraged to be open, informal and friendly, by means of the proactive socialization process which creates their organizational association and thereby identification. This in turn helps enhancing the already established open and friendly culture.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES; ENHANCING SOCIALIZATION OR IDENTIFICATION?

In the introduction it was given that organizational socialization is the process by which an individual comes to appreciate the values, abilities, expected behaviors, and social knowledge essential for assuming an organizational role and for participating as an organizational member (Louis, 1980). However other research has also indicated that an individual associating with corporate values does not necessarily have to imply that they are socialized into the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), for the fact that values may be more or less

uniform over different organizations, therefore one cannot speak of specific organizational identification.

We do not dispute the argument by Ashforth and Mael (1989) that values are not a proof of the perceived identification, more honestly our results do not even provide us with the relevant information to support their statement. However what we found it is not the organizational values which enhance identification and socialization, but that it is the *perceived* set of corporate values which can be seen as the differentiating factor in creating a unified identification with the firm. Our results show that most of the employees were not even consciously aware of the corporate values as set upon by management. They have however a shared *perception* of what the organizational values are and they identify with these *perceived* values. The shared *perceived* organizational values could thereby be seen as an enhancer of the socialization process.

This does nonetheless not mean that these values as established by management are not present, in the interviews these values came about, as previously stated, in a more subconscious level. The interviewees participated in their daily job in accordance to the corporate values of alertness, acting, courageous, and cost consciousness (discussion still remains under the authors whether the last one is a value). However evidence in our data is lacking to see if core values affect the working behavior of the employees within Alfa Laval.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMAGE; STRENGTHENING MEMBER IDENTIFICATION

In the preceding analysis it is set upon that there exists strong member identification within Alfa Laval. Dutton et al. (1994: 256) argue that attractive image increase the degree to which self-definition approximate the organizational definition. Social identity theory additionally maintains that the individual identifies with social categories partly to enhance self-esteem, additionally stating that social identity may be derived not only form the organization but also from his or her work group, department, union, lunch group, age cohorts, etc. (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Our findings relate to the theories as discussed above. Alfa Laval's new recruits are specifically proud of their organization. This pride is not necessarily assigned to the actual company image, even for the researchers it was hard to identify what the actual organizations image was. The newcomers are proud to say that they are working for a large, international and successful company. This remains however on a more superficial level. Is the image therefore really an enhancer for identification within Alfa Laval? The answer would be yes,

CHAPTER 5: Discussion

however it is not necessarily the external image which contributes to the identification, moreover it is the internal image the new recruits have formed within Alfa Laval. All of them stated that the image of the organization became even more positive and exceeded their expectations after their employment. It remains however, if it should not be the organizational culture which explains the identification? Our perception is that the open and informal culture is the image the newcomers may want to be associated with and it is that what they are proud of. The culture is thus a very important attribute of the organizational image.

6 CONCLUSION

In this section the final conclusion with respect to this research are set about. First of all the specific research questions are answered after which a general conclusion on the main question underlining this research is given. This chapter ends by giving recommendations on both the managerial side, as well as some directions for future research.

6.1 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research investigated the socialization of new recruits into organizations upon their employment. The backbone of this research was the literature review in which we discussed the existing literature in the areas of socialization and identity creation, which have later been linked by means of the social identity theory. The socialization tactics model developed by van Maanen and Schein (1977) and the member identification model by Dutton et al. (1994) were used to discuss the results from the interviews conducted at Alfa Laval AB. These two areas have been chosen since they show the socialization process from both the organizational as the individual's perspective. By linking these perspectives a better insight into the company's actual socialization intentions and the individual's identification with the firm have been established. The scope and focus of this research concentrated into the following research question:

> *"The study of the socialization process of new recruits into Alfa Laval: How does this affect their identification with knowledge intensive firms?"*

This research question has been divided into several subquestions which should lead to answering the main topic of this thesis. Next we will answer the specific research questions as discussed in the introduction of this research. In the end a final conclusion is reached towards the overlapping research question which was used as a guideline throughout this research.

6.1.1 PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AND NEW RECRUITS IDENTIFICATION

The first research question dealt with the perceived organizational identity and how recruits actually identified and associated with this identity. This was more specifically formulated in the following research question:

> *"How does the perceived organizational identity affect the new recruits association and identification with the organization?"*

Our research indicates that the *perceived* organizational identity affects new recruits in a strong sense. This was clearly shown from the analysis of Dutton et al.'s (1994) member identification model. From our analysis it was gathered that generally the international environment was something the new recruits highly associated with, as such that they indicated that they like working with different cultures since it enhances the elaborateness of work. Besides this general observation of the attractiveness of this *perceived* organizational identity aspect, other proof of the identification with the perceived organizational identity could be divided into three categories: self-continuity, self-distinctiveness and self-enhancement.

Self-continuity was enhanced by means of factors relating to the self-relevant aspect of the perceived identity. The work environment was an important factor as such that the new recruits immediately felt comfortable within the company. Something which showed in a way the communication was established as being open and friendly. The positive associations between the new recruits own identity and their perception of what Alfa Laval constituted enhanced the identification process.

Alfa Laval's culture seemed to be self-distinctive factor for new recruits to enhance the identification with the organization. The fact that Alfa Laval attaches great concern towards first of all the environment and care for the people (see also 4.1.2 The Business Principles), made that the new recruits felt a significant level of commitment and responsibility towards their coworkers. These distinguishing factors came across very clearly when discussing what made the recruits want to work for Alfa Laval.

Self-enhancement came back through the open nature of the communication. Being free to ask questions, and the constructive criticism from the side of the management enhanced that the new recruits became more and more confident in their job, but also in their behavior inside their department and project teams.

The favorable nature of the *perceived* organizational identity, by means of openness, friendliness, and foremost informality has a strong impact the new recruits. They are actively encouraged to be themselves, which is in line with what they established to be the organizations identity.

What contributes to the above researched issue is how the members and organizations characteristics interrelate to each other and how they strengthen the identification process, which leads us to the following research question:

"Does the overlap between the characteristics that a member beliefs to typify him or her as an individual and the characteristics that typify the organization indicate a stronger organizational identification?"

The new recruits interviewed in our research identified themselves as hard working, open-minded, creative, and innovative individuals. From these certain characteristics we can determine that these employees feel strongly about their position within Alfa Laval. This is explained by the fact that the characteristics of Alfa Laval appear to be consistently similar to the employees. Wherefrom it can be determined that it strengthens the organizational identification. There is no conflict found between the organizations and individuals characteristics. This could be explained by the recruitment process in which the newcomers are actively introduced in their new teams, through which an early identification of the possible match between the newcomer and the organization is established.

From the analysis as well as the results it could be argued if one can speak of identification with the organization when employees are encouraged to be themselves, and hardly any adjustment in the new recruits identity is needed in order to fit into the organization. Or when the organization fits its own behavior towards the new recruits, in the fact that it tries to be open and friendly. As was also said in the above conclusion it is also merely due to the interview process that a high behavioral fit between new recruits and the organization are sought.

6.1.2 SOCIALIZATION TACTICS AND IDENTIFICATION

In order to establish whether the socialization tactics as discussed by van Maanen and Schein (1977) lead to a greater socialization and identification with the firm the following research question was developed:

"Does organizational socialization tactics attribute to the new recruits identification with the organizations goals and values."

In the analysis no specific socialization tactic (institutionalized vs. individualized) has been found. There seems to be more a mixture between these different strategies. However the outcome was that the employees at Alfa Laval still established a strong identity, which is

contradicting to the findings of Jones (1986), who stated that a blended strategy would lead to confusion in new recruits actual role behavior. This confusion could however be brought to the fact that none of the new recruits could specifically state the values of the organization, but that they merely made up their own sets of perceived organizational values which they thought identified the company. The lack in one uniform strategy can therefore explain why these new recruits were unable to state, and thereby identify with the organizations specific values as discussed earlier. Even though still a unified set or perceived organizational values was recognized by the new recruits. This brings us to the following research question.

> *"Does the socialization process lead to a unified identification with the researched company or can the perceived identification be assigned to other factors present?"*

We have argued that the socialization process as such leads to a unified identity and identification with the company. The opinion of the researchers is that Alfa Laval may be aware of the process, hence they may not be exploring it to the full potential. From the perspective of existing literature Alfa Laval seems to be working with a so-called proactive socialization process in which new recruits have to show their own initiatives to show their compliance with the organization. However this is not completely explained by the unified identification, since proactive socialization is heavily depending on the existing workforce in order to be being successful. Therefore an important success factor in the socialization of the new recruits is the established culture of the open, informal and friendly atmosphere by which newcomers are encouraged to proactively find their way in the organization.

6.1.3 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

> *"The study of the socialization process of new recruits into Alfa Laval: How does this affect their identification with knowledge intensive firms?"*

Our initial interpretation of the new recruits' perceived organizational identity, before they joined the company was that of Alfa Laval being a large multinational, with a renowned status across both the technical education and the business world. The initial view which existed within the new recruits became more established and evolved into something more related to their experiences with the company. To a large extend we find that perceived organizational identity affects the socialization and identification process of new recruits upon employment. The positive association is essential for them to integrate into Alfa Laval. If the perceived identity is on the one hand incongruent with the actual experience of the organizations

identity and on the other hand with the individual's identity itself could cause exclusion from the overall socialization towards Alfa Laval. Additionally it could also be argued to what extent one could speak of identification when the individual's values and the perceived organizational values are already alike and when a corporate culture is established for their employees to be themselves; behavioral adaptation is thus not necessary. As such we think that identification is already established in the anticipatory socialization process in which new recruits are bound to their future managers in the recruitment interviews. Here behavioral matches are sought. Also the fact that they have to take part in a personality test which is specifically looking for values and attitudes which Alfa Laval indicates to be important could indicate that largest part of the identification happens within this initial stage.

Concluding, we found that the strengthening of the identity formation could be centered around two aspects; the proactive socialization process, and Alfa Laval's culture. The open, friendly and informal culture mixed with the proactive characteristic of the socialization process catalyzes identity formation of the new recruits upon their employment. The differentiating aspect of the perceived identity augments the self-continuity, distinctiveness and enhancement which lead to a stronger identification with the organization. This in itself seems paradoxical when asking ourselves the question if the socialization process creates identification or if it is the culture that constitutes identification. A paradox which can also be explained by the divergent existence of socialization theories developed, as was also discussed in the literature review. Van Maanen & Schein for example stated that organizational socialization was reached by means of the tactics explained before, whereas Louis (1980) argues that socialization is enhanced through culture. Our argumentation is that the socialization process, and more specifically the tactics, serves as a tool through which culture becomes an operator leading to a member's organizational identification.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section will be divided into two paragraphs, first of all the managerial contributions derived from this research, and second the recommendations for future research.

6.2.1 MANAGERIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

From our perspective we perceived that there exists an internal identity about Alfa Laval which is thus far not recognized or set about in their socialization strategies. A reason for this might of course be the radical change previously discussed which Alfa Laval has gone through. What this resulted in is that the core values as currently set in the internal

communication towards their employees does not necessarily correlate with what is actually valued within the company. Reassessment and identification of these 'new' values could facilitate and strengthen the organizational identity as well as the perceived organizational identity which we found to be an important indicator for new recruits socialization.

Additionally, from the interviews it was arrived that the informal socialization had a stronger affect on the employees, more so than the institutional socialization as was perceived by management. It is not to say that we find there are any problems with the socialization strategy within the company. However according to our opinion one should be cautious not to formalize the socialization process as such that the strength of the informal socialization is made redundant. One way not to weaken the strength of the informal socialization within Alfa Laval would be to work towards a more proactive socialization orientation, instead of a more institutionalized setting. Meaning that new recruits are more bound to initiating their own path within the organization, and that Alfa Laval should provide them with the tools to conduct in this proactive way of socializing.

6.2.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

In this research we tried to establish the link between identification and socialization theory. This remains however an area which has not been widely researched. Future research could thus focus on how these concepts are interrelated with each other and the consequences that derive from them. Also the more specific outcomes of the socialization process on specific identification consequences could indicate a more and better explanation on how the two concepts do or do not interrelate with each other. Hereby better explaining the beliefs and behaviors of individuals with respect to the socialization process. Also in order to find out how the socialization process affects specifically the attitudes of the new recruits, a more observational perspective concentrating on their day-to-day work and interaction with colleagues should be taken.

This research focused merely on the perceived organizational image and not the external image. Thereby focusing on the image the clientele has and how this affects the identification of organizational employees. This could furthermore be extended to see how the congruence between the external and internal perceived image influence the organizational identification. Research can be conducted on members working images of their work organization and behaviors when they are subject to changing conditions. These changes can be range from

structure, culture, organizational performance and so on, which may persuade members to modify their perceived organizational identity.

Lastly it can be derived from the above conclusion that adjustment of existing socialization literature is necessary in order to meet up with the new demands and changing environments in which organizations are operating. As was proven, some of the literature seems not to meet up with the current characteristics under which organizations operate, but more so the factors which influence the new recruits' integration with their future employees.

6.2.3 FINAL REMARK

This research presented to you was written under the assumption that identification happens from an individual's side, being in this instance the new recruit at Alfa Laval. However as we have noted above it could be argued that identification from the new recruits side within Alfa Laval is not necessarily happening, since the organization's characteristics acknowledge for organizational members to stay themselves. As a final remark we would therefore like to address the issue of what one could call 'reverse' identification. With this we mean to imply that the organization is identifying with its members and not what is normally assumed the individual identifies with the organization. It seems that the researched company approaches the newcomers in their behavior, in such a way that they are encouraged to be themselves. One could argue that this requires a certain amount of flexibility from an organizations side, hereby implying that the organization adjusts itself to fit the newcomer's needs. Additionally one should note that the assumption of an organization identifying with its members and not vice versa, can only be made if one looks at the organization as an organism (also see Morgan's; "Images of Organization"), meaning that an organization meets its own needs, and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

We would however like to stress that the above assumption is purely hypothetical and needs additional research for it to become a validated assumption. The researchers however thought it was an interesting observation to share and put as a point for further discussion.

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