Managers' Identity Work

Experiences from introspective management training

Thomas Andersson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

> *"Being yourself" and being manager can be complicated* (Watson & Harris, 1999: 155)

This conclusion comes from Watson & Harris' (1999) ethnographic study of managers' daily work. Managers struggle to make sense of their daily work; being a humane and caring person, but also manipulating to get people where they want to. What do we want to do as human beings and what ought we to do as representatives of an organization? Sometimes these go hand in hand, sometimes they become opposites. One of the managers in the same study even came to the strong conclusion that *"To some extent I lost the right to myself when I was appointed manager"*.

These quotations capture the complex relation that characterizes management. On the one hand you have the manager as a human being, and on the other hand you have the organizational requirements manifested in the daily structures, processes and practices that managerial work involves. Consequently, to fully understand management and managers we have to understand these two "sides" and the complex relation between them (Watson, 1997).

Considering the complex relation, one could assume that management development should take both these "sides" into consideration, but the dominating focus has been on developing the structures, processes and practices of managerial work and thus neglecting human individuality. The consequences have been a market overflowed by different recipes, concepts and tools to support managers (Rövik, 2000). This "recipe perspective", based upon the belief that successful management is something that can be achieved by implementing the right recipe in the organization, has been most evident from the 1980s up to today[1], but the view has existed at least since Taylor's (1911/1967) Scientific Management, which could be seen as the first management fad (Barley & Kunda, 1992).

The recipe perspective goes hand in hand with the attempts to "professionalize" manager work. With professionalization I mean attempts to standardize procedures and knowledge concerning managerial

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[1] From the 1980s up to today there has been a significant growth of concepts compared to previous periods. Rövik (2000) explains this growth partly by globalization, which allows different concepts to "travel" globally, partly by the increased interest to describe one's own organization in terms of organization plans etc, which made comparison with other organizations easier.

work, which means being a manager is equivalent to "knowing the right tools" and then to make the diagnosis and prescribe the "right tool as medicament"[2]. However, despite the fact that the recipe perspective dominates management discourse, there is limited support of the theory that managers actually work in this way. Firstly, the recipe perspective implies that the daily work of the manager is based upon standardized procedures, but research on managerial work (Carlsson, 1951; Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1982; Tengblad, 2002) has shown that it typically is the least standardized work in the organization. Secondly, management style is rather related to the manager's personal experiences than abstract management theories and concepts (Jönsson, 1995)[3].

Despite this limited support, training programs and education for managers in general are mostly based on learning concepts, techniques and recipes of different kinds, i.e. management is seen as based on a technical competence (Whetten & Cameron, 1991), but at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s the critique against the "over-technical" focus on management training became extensive. Whetten & Cameron (1991) called for management training improving and practicing social skills and not only teaching concepts; and Porter & McKibbin (1988) heavily criticized management training organized by American business schools for being too focused on quantitative modelling and techniques.

As a response to the criticism, management training focusing on personal development became more common. Today the trend is that the focus is slowly shifting from a focus on technical skills to a focus on social skills in management and employee trainings in US organizations (Luo, 2002) and in Scandinavian organizations (Rövik, 2000).

Consequently, the too strong focus on structures, processes and procedures of management seem to decrease in favour of a humanistic focus in management training and management discourse. In fact, the

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[2] Tengblad (1997) argues that such attempts were made in Scandinavia already during the 1960s. The American consultant George W. Kenning had specified what he considered as management in 31 principles. His vision was that with these 31 principles you became "a good leader" and "a good leader could lead anything". Kenning worked hard in trying to make manager a "real profession". From his 31 principles on management he developed management development programs for organizations in Norway and Sweden.

[3] However, these personal experiences are very much related to different recipes and concepts. The manager could be seen as a carrier of a number of recipes (and these recipes are not that many) (Jönsson, 1995). Which recipes the managers carry is a question of personal experiences, i.e. recipes that had worked for them earlier in their career. As different basic recipes were popular during different times, there are "generations" of leaders with similar experiences (Jönsson, 1996).

preference for the human side of management (leadership) is so strong today that even the recipes have to be adjusted in accordance with this logic. Rövik (2000) found that one prerequisite for a management concept to be a globally distributed "super standard"[4] is that it has a "leadership rhetoric", i.e. emphasizes a management style focusing on motivating, supporting and coaching subordinates. Furthermore, there seems to be a preference to being called leader and not manager. Manager has almost become an insult:

> *The word is leader! You are a management dinosaur when calling yourself manager! No one says manager any more, if you persist in calling yourself manager you only prove that you are not a leader!* (Berggren & Hedin, 2002, p. 37)

However, recalling the quotation in the beginning: *"Being yourself" and being manager can be complicated* (Watson & Harris, 1999: 155), could then an exclusive focus on the manager as a human being really be the solution? As if the difficulties did not exist, a hype has evolved around "personal leadership"[5] where it is claimed that leadership development is about developing your own personal and unique leadership style on the basis of who you are. The hype is manifested in different management programs as well:

> *Leading people is an art, in the same way that it is an art to live. [...] A life-affirming leadership uses this art as its starting point - just being.* (From the website of IFL[6])

The quotation does not come from any "extreme" organizer; but from the website of the largest organizer of management training in Sweden, IFL, and it represents the point of departure in one of their management training programs focusing on personal leadership. In addition to the above quoted program "Life-affirming leadership", there are programs such as "The inner journey" and "Life is not a duty" within the field of personal leadership programs organized by IFL. In general, there has been an obvious growth in management training focusing on personal leadership during the last decade (Conger, 2001; Luo, 2002).

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[4] Rövik (2000) names recipes that have had global impact super standards.

[5] "Personal leadership" is used slightly differently in English than as in this translation from the Swedish expression "personligt ledarskap". The English term focuses on everything in leadership that has to do with people (e.g. Mastrangelo et al., 2004). The Swedish term emphasize the same "people aspect", but also the personal and individual aspect of leadership, i.e. developing your own personal and unique leadership style on the basis of who you are.

[6] The Swedish Institute of Management - the largest organizer of leadership programs in Sweden

The management programs focusing on personal leadership are based on a common view of what leadership is, which I found could be represented by this quotation from another organizer of management training:

> *By becoming conscious of how you affect people through your way of being, you can choose the behaviour that is most suitable for every single situation and every individual.* (From Sky Institute's website)

The rhetoric is tempting, but what is it that makes it so tempting? Well, it seems to offer something that most people lack today – a feeling of unshakable certainty. Anderson (1995b) argues that most of us cling to the hope of finding an approach that will explain everything to us and thereby help us to deal with uncertainty and diversity. Concerning the diversity of their daily work, managers are perhaps the people that most of all would wish for such a solution. Management training focusing on personal leadership, or introspective management training, which will be the term I will use from now on, responds to that hope in its rhetoric, by offering less confusion: Find your inner self and listen to it, and you will have your one logic, your one identity, without confusion. The view has its origin in Eastern philosophy and has been brought to Western society by Jung (1933), but also by humanistic psychologists like Rogers (1961) and Maslow (1968). Introspection is about "finding the true self", which then could act like a compass heading us in the right direction and bringing wholeness into life (Zweig, 1995). Consequently, leadership abilities would improve as well. The idea is that to understand others it is important to understand oneself – self-knowledge appears as an important prerequisite of relating to other people, leading them and managing.

Maybe the creation[7] of this type of leadership program is a way to deal with living in postmodernity. Anderson (1995a) claims that postmodernity[8] has not only created postmodernists, it has also created a growth of neo-romantic culture, which not only expresses a deep disaffection for modern civilization, but also a reluctance to take on the uncertainties of postmodernism. It has most features of early romanticism, but appears in updated forms as it rejects both postmodern and modern, and in that sense could be viewed as premodern. The rhetoric of these management programs indeed clings to the romantic era.

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[7] Or *re-creation* considering the close relation to T-groups and sensitivity training in the 1960s and 1970s (Conger, 2001)

[8] Postmodernity is here treated as the time (or condition) we live in right now, and postmodernism as the many different schools and movements it has produced (Anderson, 1995b)

In the defence of this type of management training one must say that it responds to the criticism of management training in general. The considerable amount of such management training programs indicates that management is an activity that could be learned, but research results (Björkegren, 1986; Burke & Day, 1986; Lewis, 1995) regarding the effects of such training make it seem doubtful if the possible learning takes place in these programs and if it at all creates any organizational learning or utility. When managers describe how they "learned" to be managers, they seem to make fun of programs, courses and books concerning the subject (Watson & Harris, 1999). Instead it is suggested that managers learn mainly through practice (Jönsson, 1995; Wenglen, 2003). Furthermore, Watson (2001) claims that to become a manager seems to be a question of maturity in the managerial role rather than learning. Watson & Harris (1999) describe this as a long-term process of constant becoming, which continues throughout the manager's working life. They name this process the emergent manager. Hill (1992) supports this argument and describes this process of becoming a manager as mastering a new identity rather than learning some managerial techniques.

The advocates of seeing manager development as a question of mastering a new identity and maturity in the managerial role (e.g. Hill, 1992; Watson & Harris, 1999; Watson, 2001) notice an important problem in studying identity and role processes: They are hard to study as they are slow and rather stable processes. Furthermore, they are only to a limited extent visible and longitudinal studies are required to eventually understand changes in these processes. A training focusing on personal leadership invites the managers to reflect on identity and role processes. Such introspective management training might challenge and/or accelerate these processes and thereby make them visible to a larger extent.

According to Conger (1993) management training focusing on personal growth (introspective management training) is claimed to have more lasting effects on managers than other training, but we know very little about what these effects consist of.

Thus, introspective management training seems to have a potential when it comes to personal development, but how is that related to management? The problems that the quotation in the beginning emphasizes still remain, but the focus shifts to the other of the two "sides". Instead of focusing on the structures, processes and procedures of managerial work,

introspective management training focuses on the manager as a human being. That might solve some problems, but it might create new ones as well. As Conger (1993) suggests, these programs are believed to have stronger influences on managers than other training programs, but what are these influences? And what do they mean in relation to the fact that these people are managers? And what if your inner self is not a manager? Even if the potential of such a training might be great, there will hardly be a clear-cut easy way to realise it.

Following the problem background, the driving question of this thesis is:

How does off-site introspective management training influence practicing managers?

2. UNDERSTANDING MANAGERS' COMPLEX SITUATIONS

The general research problem presented in chapter 1 must be further specified to be useful as a guideline for the research scope. The purpose of this chapter is to divide the general research question into specified and researchable questions and to establish the general aim of the study divided into sub aims. The general research problem will be developed by problematizing the central phenomena it is based upon. The general research problem was stated as:

How does off-site introspective management training influence practicing managers?

In the heart of the research problem is the practicing manager. Everyone – a manager is no exception – is continually changing, adapting and learning. The thesis and the research problem are grounded in the view of the human being as always in a process of "becoming". Consequently, as the manager is always in a process of becoming, it would be meaningless with a "cause-effect" study related to the causal effects of participating in introspective management training, as these possible effects would be impossible to separate from the "overall becoming process". Instead introspective management training should be viewed as another source of influence, i.e. one among others. However, introspective management training constitutes a new influence for the managers and they relate and respond to it. It is therefore important to understand what this new influence consists of and how it could be characterized. The first part of this problem development chapter will therefore be devoted to introspective management training, but also management training in general to enable a better understanding of the characteristics of this specific type of management training. The term off-site means that the training is separated from their normal working environment, both when it comes to place and time, but also that there is an external organizer and participants from other organizations.

Managers are individuals who carry out managerial work, so the second part of the problem development chapter will be devoted to managerial work – what managers *do*. Furthermore, these managers are unique human beings, with their own values, anxieties and interests, but to understand the managers we must also understand the structures and processes that they are a part of and interact with, as these also influence them. Consequently, theorizing managerial work must be an interdisciplinary activity, as the minimum requirement is to deal with

human individuality in connection with daily structures, processes and practices that managerial work involves (Watson, 1997). To make the research problem researchable I will have to develop the understanding of these two "sides" and the complex relation between them. A managerial role, like any occupational role, creates unique demands in terms of making sense (Watson, 1998), which will have implications for the manager's self-understanding and identity (Hughes, 1937). Consequently, I must also understand what it means to be manager, which means handling more than the managers as human beings as they are members of different social systems of meaning - members of groups, employees and representatives of organizations, members of one or several professions etc. Part three, four and five will therefore be devoted to influences on the "becoming process" of managers. The management discourse will be discussed in part three. The fact that management discourse is not the only discourse that the managers are part of will be analyzed in part four, which will be devoted to possible conflicting discourses. The fifth part will deal with the complex relation between managers and their organizations.

In the last part of the problem development chapter the five previous parts will be summarized and their implications for the final problem statement will be presented together with the final aim and sub aims of the thesis.

2.1 Management training – from technical work to identity work

Even if the managers are at the heart of this study, in order to understand them, there is a need to understand the influences on them. The aim is not to make a cause-and-effect study of introspective management training, but to understand the managers being influenced by the training among other sources of influence. This chapter is devoted to introspective management training in order to develop an understanding of its possible influence on the managers.

Management training to a large extent mirrors the development within management theory and management practice. Consequently, chapter 2.1.1 will discuss how "soft skills", which introspective management training represents an extreme of, entered management and management training. Chapter 2.1.2 then deals with development within management training in general and chapter 2.1.3 deals with the development within Sweden. Introspective management training means that personal growth discourse entered management training. Chapter 2.1.4 will explore this

discourse to understand the ideology the training is based upon. Chapter 2.1.5 concerns previous research on management training based upon personal growth discourse and finally chapter 2.1.6 summarizes the implications for the general research problem.

2.1.1 "Soft skills" in management

To argue that focusing on soft skills in management is something new would probably be misleading. Barley & Kunda (1992) argue that the human relations movement, which developed in direct opposition to scientific management's rationalism and individualism, had a large impact on business from Mayo's (1930) early research in the late 1920s until the middle of the 1950s. The rhetoric of the human relations movement emphasized the worker as a social being driven by a need for belonging and acceptance. Mayo and his research team performed a lot of research during the 1930s and in the 1940s human relations had sufficient institutional support. During the 1940s, Lewin (1947; 1951) was the most well known advocate of human relations.

However, while human relations became institutionalised, criticism grew (Barley & Kunda, 1992). Critics argued that the loss of individualism had led to a homogenizing mediocrity. The unintended consequences of cohesion and loyalty were said to limit the firm's ability to think creatively when it was needed to do so (Janis, 1972). This coincided with the start of using computers in firms, and the human relations era was replaced by an era of systems rationalism.

The interest in the human side of business was then decreasing, while systems rationalism and the contingency theory ruled research. However, there were some researchers (for example Maslow (1954), McGregor (1960) and Argyris (1964)) that continued to emphasize the importance of the individual even during this period. Their ideas have had a large impact even if they struggled against a dominating paradigm of systems rationalism.

Soft skills in management gained new attention during the end of the 1970s and increased greatly during the 1980s. The interest in organization culture was the vehicle for re-introducing "soft skills" into business. Even if the idea to see organizations as cultures and talk about organizational climates had appeared much earlier (see for example Jacques, 1951 and Schein, 1969), it did not attract much attention until the late 1970s. However, then the interest exploded and the concept organizational

culture entered into management discourse via two paths (Barley & Kunda, 1992). Firstly, there were theorists influenced by anthropology and symbolic interactionism that claimed that organizations should be viewed as socially constructed systems of meaning. Secondly, and more importantly considering the impact, there was the work of consultants and applied researchers who wrote primarily for practitioners. The images were very much the same, but the claim of the second group was more pragmatic: developing "strong" cultures constituted a way to enhance competitiveness and for especially American firms to emulate the Japanese firms, which were considered as a great threat during this time.

Barley & Kunda (1992) argue that the rhetoric of the culture advocates was to openly attack systems rationalism. Their claim was that when firms had focused on rational systems of control, they had sacrificed social integration, quality and flexibility. Even if they managed to streamline production, this was made at the expense of loyalty and commitment, according to the culture advocates. The strongest rhetoric belief was that economic performance required the commitment of the employees, especially in a turbulent environment, but it was also based on the assumption that "strong" cultures (where unity and loyalty were the primary attributes) could be consciously designed and manipulated.

2.1.2 Development within management training

Management training is one part of employee training. Luo (2002) describes the development within employee training in US organizations as a movement from training specific technical skills through a period of human relations when group issues were in focus to the present focus on general personal development.

In the 1920s employee training was mainly focused on specific technical skills. The content of the training started to expand to also include human relations skills between the 1930s and the 1960s and thereby leading to soft skills entering management. The fact that the content of management training expanded could explain why Wren (1972) noticed a significant growth of staff training during the human relations era from the 1930s until the 1950s. Training of managers gradually became accepted during this period (Luo, 2002). In 1946 only 5.2 % of companies reported that they had structured executive training, while in 1952 it had increased to 30 %. The training emphasized during the human relations era was mainly sensitivity training and T-groups bringing methods from psychotherapy into companies (Waring, 1991). Through these forums

"democratic leadership" was imposed on the firms. The focus of training was to improve interpersonal effectiveness, but it turned out to be only partly a success. Ironically T-groups fell on its own rhetoric. Despite the ambition to emphasize democratic leadership, T-groups were criticized for being too authoritarian, and Mills (1970: 22) argued that they used therapy to form "*pseudo-gemeinschaft islands in a gesellschaft swamp*".

During the 1970s personal development was introduced in executive training and later also in employee training. Luo (2002) uses the term personal development training as "*general training programs that aim at improving one's cognitive and behavioral skills in dealing with self and others*" (Luo, 2002:2), i.e. training that is not immediately related to the technical aspects of job tasks, but intended to enhance the personal potential and thereby indirectly contribute to the organization. Some examples are communication skills, time management, leadership, and creativity training.

Luo (2002) gives an institutional explanation to the increase of training in personal development. She sees it as the consequence of the ideal of "the participatory citizenship model of organization", which according to her has become the dominating model after the bureaucratic model was outdated. The basis of the participatory citizenship model of organizations is that the role of individuals in an organization is empowered rather than conformist as in a bureaucracy, and that the organizational reach goes beyond its core production or service to also include a wide range of social responsibilities outside its core activities. This drives the development of programs focusing on personal development.

In the US there was a shift in management training at the end of the 1980s. The shift had its origin in a critical discussion started by Porter & McKibbin (1988) regarding the MBA education at business schools. These programs were accused of being too heavily based on analytical methods and not at all connected to the daily work of managers. This criticism increased the interest in behavioural skills and was the start of a new generation of management books and education that were to a larger extent based on behaviour skills (see for example Whetten & Cameron, 1991).

External, off-site management training is big business and it creates a living for a large part of the consulting industry. A large number of concepts and ideas are spread to practicing managers through these agents. They have a symbiotic relation to fashionable concepts, as they

are an important part of creating different management fashions (Abrahamson, 1996; 1997) as well as earning their living by the fashions (Rövik, 2000).

A significant number of companies have internal management training. There are arguments that management training constitutes such an important part of business that it should be handled internally. For example Norbäck (1992) thinks that it is better to "produce than buy managers". By that he means that manager development has a strategic significance and should thereby be arranged (and controlled) by the companies themselves, but with the help of partners. Edström (1992) argues that management development should take its point of departure in the core attitudes and beliefs of the company and that management training is the best opportunity to propagate these. Thereby management training should be internally planned and organized with the corporate management as an important actor. Internal management training is seen as an arena for dialogue and networking, which both the organization and the individual would gain from. Consequently, I would argue that generally internal management training has a larger proportion of socialization than external management training has.

That internal management training is preferable to external management training seems to be the dominant view among companies, at least if we analyze their behaviour. Porter & McKibbin (1988) showed in their evaluation of management education and the development at business schools in America that companies mainly used in-house, internal management training. As stated previously Porter & McKibbin (1988) made the interpretation that the reason for this was a lack of appropriateness and relevance in management training organized by the business schools, as they focused too much on teaching analytical technical tools instead of soft skills (which they define as leading and handling people), but the explanation could just as well be unwillingness to let go of the control of the content of management training.

The main criticism against in-house organized training is related to control issues and socialization. Kunda (1992) ethnographically described an organization's conscious culture work, which highlighted different perspectives of the organization culture. On the one hand there was the managerial project of designing a culture, and on the other hand the organization culture as the members in the organization lived it and the ambiguity it created. What Kunda (1992) provided was a close description of how normative control works, i.e. to control behaviour indirectly through controlling people's minds, to control how they think,

but in a subtle way as it acts under the words of freedom and flexibility. Kunda (1992) provided insights about the dark side of strong socialization and normative control. In-house staff and management training based upon the logic of normative control have been used in a way that hardly can be seen as humanistic, despite a humanistic and tempting rhetoric. Alvesson & Willmott (2002) claim that using organization culture as a means of control could be seen as using identity regulation as a form of control. Management has in later years often been concerned with managing the "insides" of the workers rather than their behaviour directly (Deetz, 1995). Alvesson & Willmott (2002) point out discourses as quality management, service management, innovation and knowledge work, where there is a managerial interest in regulating employees' insides, i.e. their self-image, feelings and identifications. Identity regulation includes more or less intentional effects of social practices, i.e. induction, training and promotion procedures could also have implications for the shaping of the "right" identity (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

The example of the dark side of normative control might also show the difficulties of providing training in "soft skills". To control the insides of people in order to be able to control their actions could be seen as a major trespass on their private life and their personal identity. However, imposing certain actions without trying to control people's insides can also interfere with people's private lives and identities, which Leidner (1993) exemplifies in a study on service companies. She shows that by regulating how workers should interact with customers, the company had an important influence on the workers' identity constructions. The reason is that service includes partly the service in itself, partly a human interaction. By regulating how the workers should receive the customer in detail, the company interfered in the way people interacted, which influences their daily life outside work as well.

2.1.3 Management training in Sweden

In Sweden, management training is a relatively new phenomenon, at least as a common part of organizational everyday life (Tengblad, 1997; Rövik, 2000). Even if such activities began to emerge in the 1950s (Tengblad, 1997), it was not until the 1980s that management training became a common phenomenon (Rövik, 2000). On the other hand, management training had a very big impact then and the 1980s became the decade of the big leadership ventures. An important part of this was the development of management programs with a management/business

base connected to the business schools (Tengblad, 1997; Rövik, 2000). Management training and development became one of the most emphasized factors in organizational development during this period, which reflected the new belief that management was a business or an activity in itself, not an extension of the activity that was managed. The argument was that management and leadership activities needed certain competences, thus they can and have to be learned.

Rövik (2000) argues that there has been a shift in Scandinavian staff training, which he summarizes as a development "from hand to spirit". In the 1960s, the focus was on mass education. The education was stereotypical and concerned work-related issues. Gradually this has changed. In the 1970s, the education was still stereotypical, but it aimed at increasing the general skills of the personnel, rather than their specific work skills. This focus remained during the 1980s. The difference was that the necessity of individual education was put forward. The individual focus has remained during the 1990s, and the view of education has been broadened to gradually complement competence development with personal development.

The most significant actor in external management training in Sweden today is IFL[9], which was founded in 1969 through a merger between SAF:s[10] and SCIV:s[11] trainings. However, during the 1980s several competing institutes were started in connection with business schools at universities (Tengblad, 1997). These actors have had less focus on analytical methods in comparison with their US equivalent (Targama, 1992) and they have therefore not been exposed to similar criticism such as that from Porter & McKibbin (1988) mentioned in the previous chapter.

In the 1980s Björkegren (1986) made an extensive study on how managers experienced management training as being of relevance to the practice of their job. His conclusion was disappointing (at least for the organizer) as the relevance was considered to be very limited. From the results Björkegren (1986) suggested that to improve management training, more time had to be devoted to social skills. At that point 95 % of the time was devoted to techniques and 5 % of the time to social skills. Clearly, since then management training has been more behavioural oriented. However, Sandberg (2001) claims that the increased

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[9] Institutet för Företagsledning (The Swedish Institute for Management)
[10] Svenska arbetsgivarföreningen (Swedish Employer Association)
[11] Svenska Civilekonomföreningen (Swedish Association of Graduates in Business Administration and Economics)

behavioural and humanistic orientation of management training is mainly rhetorical, but when it comes to practice it is maybe not that evident. Sandberg (2001) made this suggestion after having studied the social constructions of management that IFL is based upon. He concluded that the most important difference between the social construction of management produced in IFL and the general social construction of management (in literature and research) is that "the need to be tough" has been replaced by a humanistic base, but the humanistic base has had limited impact on management practice in Sweden.

Trollestad (1994) develops the problematic relation between rhetoric and practice in training more thoroughly. He points out that assumptions of human nature are poorly handled in management training. He shows that the conception of human nature in management training in Sweden is characterized by polarities, which are not openly and critically challenged in relation to each other. Trollestad (1994) defines the two poles as a deterministic assumption of human nature manifested in a mainly technical interest in knowledge on the one hand and on the other hand an individualistic assumption about human nature manifested in a practical knowledge interest. The organizers of the leadership training programs he studied shifted between the two different perspectives seemingly unaware of the fact and totally without questioning the incompatibility of the two views.

2.1.4 Personal growth discourse

The particular management training followed in this research project has its basis in personal growth discourse[12], so before going into introspective management training the personal growth discourse as a whole will be discussed. Personal growth is hardly a coherent term, but it is possible to find some common features that are often mentioned in the writings by authors in the field. The most basic feature most authors (Covey, 1989; De Mello & Stroud, 1990; Mitroff et. al, 1994; Neal, 1997; Patterson, 1992; Peck, 1993; Roof, 1993) seem to agree on, is that *personal growth*

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[12] Previously the term personal development was used, which Luo (2002:2) defined as *"improving one's cognitive and behavioral skills in dealing with self and others"*. Consequently, personal development is a very broad term. Therefore I use personal growth here, which could be seen as the part of personal development that is most involved with self-actualizing based upon humanistic psychology (Conger, 2001).

is a process of focusing within, in order to gain awareness, thus self-knowledge.[13]

Often personal growth is described as a journey within, where the belief is that "looking inside" and "being aware" are roads to self-knowledge. The most well known theorizing on such a journey is Jung's theory of individuation (Jung, 1933; Jung & von Franz, 1964; Eddinger, 1972; Harding, 1965), which is described as the individual's striving to become whole and distinctive from the collective to realize his/her specific purpose. Jung's view of the self is influenced by Eastern philosophy and the individuation process came to be seen as a "healthy growth", which should enable the self to act like a compass heading people in the right direction and bringing wholeness into life (Zweig, 1995).

The process of focusing within is described as finding a balance between the inner and outer world. The argument is that because of the present "over-focus" on the outer world and outer values, balance can only be found through focusing within, which is claimed to represent the quest to unite the inner and outer world (King & Nicol, 1999).

At the heart of personal growth discourse is, according to Conger (2001), humanistic psychology and Maslow's (1954) idea of finding what "the true self" is and wants. In personal growth the metaphor of a person as an onion is often used to understand introspection. The logic of the metaphor is that layer after layer could be peeled off, and the "further in" we go, the deeper and deeper the understanding of who we are will become. Thus, the metaphor describes reaching "the true self", to use the vocabulary of the humanistic psychologists.

Hammer (1998) supports the roots in humanistic psychology. He has in his extensive writings on new age and personal growth found that it has been heavily influenced by humanistic and existentialistic psychology. In

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[13] Some researchers argue that personal development, personal growth, new age, self-knowledge, introspection etc all have religious aspects. Sometimes names as new spirituality are used to describe the phenomena. Conger (1994) argues that personal growth has a spiritual content, if you see the spirit as "the inside" or the "non-physical part" of the human being, but he claims that it therefore does not by default relate to a religious framework. Cavanagh (1999) thinks that the main reason why spirituality often is automatically connected to religion is that the inner search historically has been the domain of religion. Patterson (1997) explains the relation between religion and other forms of inner search as religion being the map and spirituality being the territory, i.e. religion is one tool to obtain spirituality and personal development or introspection are others. Cavanagh (1999) and Mitroff (1994) argue that an increased suspicion of organized religion is an important explanation of the increasing interest in personal growth. Personal growth has simply become religion's substitute. De Mello & Stroud (1990) argue that as organized religion has become an ideology in itself, without connection to its original quest – to support spirituality, people are now leaving the traditional domains of religion.

fact the fundamental beliefs are gathered from these perspectives in psychology and, to bring the issue to a head, personal growth is even the continuation of humanistic/existentialistic psychology, which otherwise does not have any modern practitioners.

Existential psychology and humanistic psychology have different roots, but have gradually merged and are today almost inseparable. The common ground is that both perspectives believe that there is a part of the self that is "truer" and good by nature, and everything that is bad is created by external factors. Humanistic psychologists, as Rogers (1961), warn people of defining themselves too much through their social roles. He believes that they risk living inauthentic lives in which they deny their true feelings and instead try to make an impression on others. Existentialists (as Fromm, 1956; Sartre, 1956; Kierkegaard, 1843/2000) notice the comfort in adopting a social identity in order "to fit in", but the price of this comfort is high as it is based on a denial of the agency of the self. Buber (1994) relates the existential self to interpersonal relations as he argued that the self is most directly experienced in interpersonal relations. He described experiences of "true and false selves" as living in two different worlds. In "the world of the true self" people meet authentically in relations, and in the other world (in which most people live according to Buber (1994)) people do not live their lives fully as they only relate to pictures of others that are not fully true. The pictures are social selves and not true selves. Buber (1994) advocates authentic relationships where Rogers (1961) advocates authentic experiences, but in fact the arguments are closely related.

2.1.5 Introspective management training

There has been a general increasing interest in personal growth in our society the last decades (King & Nicol, 1999), and its impact on management has mainly been through introspective management training. Yukl (2002) names this type of management training personal growth programs, i.e. training designed to improve self-awareness and "overcome inner barriers to psychological growth and development of management skills". Introspective management training has its origin in the human relations era of psychotherapeutic elements in staff training. The basic groundwork is from T-groups in the 1960s[14]. Conger (2001) describes today's personal growth programs in management as the by-product of decades of experiments within several streams – T-groups, New age movement and humanistic psychology focusing on self-actualisation and human potential.

Participants in introspective management training are usually managers who do not work together and the focus is on personal growth rather than on organizational or group development (Conger, 1993). Conger (2001) describes the training as aiming at empowering participants to take greater responsibility for their own lives and (ultimately, as they are managers) their own organizations.

Conger (2001) distinguishes personal growth programs from other management training focusing on "soft skills" by the former focusing primarily on emotions and the psyche, while the other focuses on the mind and on behavioural skills. Consequently other behaviour-oriented management training relies on management seen more as a matter of skills or concepts rather than self-actualisation. The experience from such training lacks the emotional experiences and the psychological depth that personal growth training attempts to achieve.

Conger (2001) describes the key ideas and the main rhetoric of this type of training as:
- Taking responsibility (you are the creator of your life, not a victim of it)
- Realizing your potential (the true potential is reachable within you)
- Living in the present (don't wait for sources from the outside)

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[14] Discussed briefly in chapter 2.1.2

He divides the main methods used in personal growth training to achieve these goals into four main groups:

Personal Mastery	Peer and trainer feedback
- To overcome risk-taking fears - To build self-esteem and confidence - To experience leadership	- To learn about one's interpersonal behaviour - To learn about discrepancies between one's current reality and one's aspirations
Empowerment[15]	Reflection
- To establish and act on one's personal agenda and goals - To assume greater personal responsibility for one's work and private life - To take leadership initiatives	- To discover hidden goals, talents and values; and to realize how one trades these off at work - To see imbalances between work and personal life - To see one's leadership potential

Source: Conger (2001) p. 24

As personal growth programs often involve strong emotional experiences it has proved that they are more likely than other programs to have lasting effects on the participants (Conger, 1993), but on the other hand there has been very limited research on how these "lasting effects" have consequences for managing.

Conger (2001) argues that there are numerous naive assumptions about management and leadership in personal growth training. He strongly questions whether the basic assumptions are related to the ability to manage people. Firstly, start with the goal to find the power and the passion within. Why should this be connected to management? The manager participating in a program might just as well find that his/her talent is unrelated to management. Secondly, is risk-taking something that the organization surely gains from? Or does it mean taking reckless

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[15] Note that this empowerment really means to empower oneself and is not directly related to the management concept called empowerment. Empowerment has its origin in politics and sociology. It entered business in the 1980s and had great impact on practice, as its rhetoric is very tempting and persuasive (Rövik, 2000), but its original meaning was to some extent lost when it was "translated" to a business logic. Macintosh (1994) therefore argues that what we have seen in practice so far is rather a pseudo empowerment than a real empowerment. I agree, and see the empowerment concept in business (for example Kinlaw, 1995) as very far from the original idea of empowering people. Kinlaw (1995) expresses it himself as he believes that the fact that the term empowerment springs from politics has been its major limitation. The direct translation from politics has made empowerment projects focusing on delegating responsibilities a goal in itself, while Kinlaw (1995) argues that the major goals of empowerment in organizational improvement are not fairness and equal rights. Instead they are a means to achieve continuous improvement. The concept empowerment contains very little of the original empowering ideas, which personal growth training are based upon.

chances with the organization? Thirdly, what is it that says that "the whole person", i.e. the one with the ability of personal intimacy, of keeping a balance with one's life, of being in touch with one's important values and of acting upon them, makes a better manager? On the contrary some psychologists claim that the inability of personal intimacy helps managers to do their job. Furthermore, many successful managers do not have a balance; rather they are consumed by their work. Indeed, some might argue that to become a great manager, one must sacrifice a personal or family side. Finally, there is no necessary connection with acting upon humanistic values and good management or leadership. Some successful managers are known to be more autocratic and self-centred than humanistic values would suggest.

2.1.5 Implications for the research problem

The gradually increased interest in soft skills in management training has opened the doors for introspective management training. This type of training focuses exclusively on the person, but the connection to management is sometimes vague. The manifestation of the training would presumably be an identity quest, and especially connected to manager identity. Thereby the identity work of the manager during training is an interesting focus. Furthermore, in introspective management training the focus is exclusively on the person without any particular attention given to organizational requirements or demands, which probably would be most evident when returning to the organization. Strict focus on the person would raise some questions regarding the potential organizational benefits from the training. As Conger (2001) argues: why should self-actualising be related to management? Is it really self-evident?

Consequently, there are a number of unanswered questions when it comes to how introspective management training might influence a manager. The questions are related to the specific character of this type of management training, which could be seen as an extreme when it comes to focusing on the individual. There are numerous naive assumptions about management in personal growth training alongside with some positive benefits. Both are worth investigating.

2.2 Doing managerial work – an immense number of role transitions

A manager is per definition someone who conducts managerial work, but the knowledge of what this work consists of is not as extensive as one

might think considering the high level of interest in management. Barley & Kunda (2001) argue that during the 1960s and the 1970s a shift away from work-studies began in organizational research in favour of abstract frameworks in analysing organizational processes as open systems. They think this shift is unfortunate and that we have to bring work back into organization research, as we otherwise risk modelling outdated images of what people actually do. I think their argument is very much visible when studying management. As the most extensive body of research in management originates from the last decades, research in managerial work contains a limited amount of studies on what it means to conduct managerial work and an extensive amount of studies on abstract management concepts and processes. The terms management and leadership are often used as descriptions of the work a manager (and/or a leader) does. However, these terms are not easy to deal with as they are based on several different definitions and are used in many different ways. The first part of this chapter will therefore discuss these concepts, which unfortunately do not say much about managerial work. The second part will summarize some of the research results on the nature of managerial work that has been done.

2.2.1 Management and/or leadership

The term management is used in numerous ways. Both in research and practice, we often use the term without explicitly defining what we mean. Watson (2001) suggests that there are three main senses in which we use the word management:

1. Management as function: the overall steering or directing of an organization.
2. Management as activities: the activities carried out in order to bring about the overall steering or directing of the organization.
3. Management as the people who manage: the people responsible for steering or directing the organization through carrying out the various activities, which make this possible.

The overall interest of the thesis is number three, management described as the people who manage – the managers. However, the focus of this part will be on number two, management as activities.

So far in the thesis I have used the terms management and leadership without defining a possible difference between them. As there is an ongoing debate about the difference between management and leadership

(which I as a matter of fact find most exaggerated) I will discuss the terms briefly. It is not only management that is used in numerous ways, the same goes for leadership, according to Yukl (1989), who notes that there seem to be as many definitions of leadership as there are researchers in the field. He argues that the only common ground that he was able to find in these definitions is that leadership involves an influence process. In fact, Alvesson & Sveningson (2003) question whether leadership is something beyond discourse (language) and consequently there are reasons to hold a skeptical attitude to the "realness" and "robustness" of leadership (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

Some writers, especially in practitioner literature, define management and leadership as opposites. The clear distinction has its origin in Zaleznik (1977), but the big impact mainly came from the writings of Bennis & Nanus (1985) and Kotter (1988, 1990). Bennis & Nanus (1985) relate management and leadership to the people that manage or lead. They claim that "*managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing*" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985:21), which implies that leaders are preferable. Conger (1992) has the same point of departure in his writing on how to transform managers to leaders, i.e. it is based on the assumption that managers and leaders are different. Kotter (1988, 1990) takes another point of departure when he describes management and leadership drawing on the different core processes that they consist of. He describes management as a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. Examples of such processes are planning and budgeting, establishing structures through organizing and staffing, and control through monitoring. Leadership on the other hand is the process consisting of human interaction (mainly between the leader and those who are led) and deals with aligning people, establishing direction, motivating and inspiring.

I disagree with the view proposed by Bennis & Nanus (1985) and Conger (1992) that people are either managers or leaders with an implicit assumption of the inefficiency of managers and the superiority of leaders. If management and leadership are to be separated I prefer the view proposed by Kotter (1988, 1990), which means that management and leadership are different processes, but they do not need to involve different people.

However, I would rather not make a clear distinction between management and leadership. The people that I am following in my study are managers and I suppose that they are leaders as well, but my research

interest is not to define whether they are leaders or not. The managers in the study are performing managerial work, which includes both management and leadership activities (to use Kotter's (1988, 1990) processes), but my main interest is in the managers as individuals and not in their activities. The activities are dealt with in relation to the manager as a person, i.e. how they construct what it means for them to be manager, but also how their construction of themselves as managers influences what they do. Consequently, I will take a pragmatic approach to the two concepts. I will use the traditional view that leadership is a part of management. For example Fiedler (1996:242) sees leadership as "*the part of management that involves the supervision of others*" and Stoner & Freeman (1989:425) as "*the management function that involves managers most directly with subordinates*". Watson (2001:10) deals with this issue by not mentioning leadership at all. Instead he makes a general definition of management as "*simply a matter of running an organization so that the variety of people who want something out of it will go on supporting it in such a way that it is able to continue its existence into the future*". I use Watson's (2001) pragmatic definition of management as a guideline rather than a definition, which means that I am studying leadership as a part of management, in line with Fiedler's (1996) and Stoner & Freeman's (1989) definitions. However, I am reluctant to take the definitions further as it might delimit my empirical work.

The brief descriptions of management and leadership did not bring us very close to the nature of the work that managers do. However, their impact on language is significant and the concepts will be further dealt with when management discourse will be discussed in chapter 2.3.1.

2.2.2 The nature of the work

Early management theory relied heavily on Fayol (1916/1949) and his description of the principal administrative activities of managers: planning, organizing, giving orders, co-ordinating and controlling. He formulated 14 principles of what he considered as "good administration". Even if Fayol was strictly normative, his principles were based on his own experience as a manager. Researchers without this experience tended to follow this normative course, and early management research therefore tended to regard what management *should* do (Tengblad, 2003). Not until Carlsson (1951) was there an extensive study on what managers *actually* did. Carlsson's (1951) study could have been revolutionary for management theory, but in fact it had a limited impact on research and practice (Tengblad, 2003). Carlsson (1951) found that normal working

days for managers were characterized by frequent interruptions; managers had hardly any time at all for themselves in their offices. Mintzberg (1973) described this phenomenon in a similar study 20 years later as "brevity, variety and fragmentation".

Carlsson's (1951) study gave no support for the existing dominant management theory, which was mainly occupied with decision theory and rational analysis. Instead, Carlsson's (1951) study showed that managers spent most of their time interacting with others. Kotter (1982) came to the same conclusion in a later study. He showed that managers mainly managed through talking and relating. Consequently, Carlsson (1951), Mintzberg (1973) and Kotter (1982) came to similar conclusions: management is mainly a social process and its main component is social interaction.

However, a lasting confusion after these studies was when the managers had time for analysing and thinking. Obviously, they did analyse, but when and how? Schön (1983) presented an answer to this question. He challenged the focus on standardized and technical problem solving of professional work. Schön (1983) showed that an essential part of professional work was the problem setting, which is not in itself a technical problem, even if it is a necessary condition for technical problem solving. He described the problem setting as reflection-in-action, where the practitioner started a conversation with the situation. Reflection-in-action, according to Schön (1983), questions the belief that "either you think or you act" as the practitioners were reflecting while they were acting. Consequently, the missing "analysing and thinking" in the previous studies on managerial work could be explained. The reflection was made in action, not as a separate state or activity. Schön (1983) emphasizes the "conversation with the situation". I argue that a manager's preference for social interaction and conversation proved in earlier studies (Carlsson, 1951; Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1982) could be described as another example of having a conversation with the management situation. Managers work with words, as Jönsson (2001) puts it, and probably the conversation with others is just as important as the individual conversation with the situation[16] emphasized by Schön (1983) when it comes to managerial work.

Tengblad (2002) replicated Carlsson's (1951) study 50 years later to investigate continuity and change in managerial work during the last 50

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[16] Schön (1983) did not mainly study managers; his main targets were professional workers working individually, which could explain why he emphasized the conversation with the situation, while in a manager job the conversation with the situation goes through interaction with others.

years. Some major changes had taken place in managerial work. What Carlsson (1951) saw as a fragmentation of *time* (frequent interruptions), Tengblad (2002) thought remained, but with an additional fragmentation of *space* (managers spend very much of their time outside the office walls). One of the continuities is the managerial preference for personal communication, which further emphasizes Jönsson's (2001) conclusion that managers work with words. Jönsson (2001) describes organizing work as emergent and argues that it should be seen as a co-produced narrative between managers and subordinates, which maintains relations and social networks. Understanding managerial work means understanding managerial talk. I agree, and furthermore, of interest for this study, interaction is an important part of defining oneself and should thereby have consequences for the managers' self-definition.

Managerial work is characterized by diversity. Mintzberg (1973) identified ten different managerial roles, which managers changed between to deal with this diversity. He divided these roles into three groups depending on the activity that was connected to the role: Interpersonal roles, Information roles and Decision roles. Referring to Mintzberg's (1973) typology of different managerial roles, being a manager must mean incessant role transitions, when the manager shifts from one role to another. Besides the role transitions as a manager there are of course still more role transitions if we consider the manager's "private" roles outside working life.

However, Mintzberg (1973) never problematized the transitions in themselves. His main focus was on the different activities connected to the roles and he thereby neglected what Berger & Luckman (1966) describe as the cognitive and emotional state of the role. They argue that being initiated into the cognitive and affective layers that directly or indirectly are appropriate to the role is just as important as learning the "outward" routines and behaviour of the role. The cognitive and affective layers of the role make role transitions more difficult as they then mean more than only shifting between activities, they mean shifting between different ways of being[17].

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[17] Ashforth (2001) argues that the role transition is often incorrectly viewed as transitions between different stable states. Rather role transitions are always in process, as people are in a state of constant "becoming-exploring" different roles. Role transition*ing* would probably be a better term.

2.2.3 Implications for the research problem

A managerial role, like any occupational role, creates unique demands in terms of making sense (Watson, 1998), which will have implications for the manager's self-understanding and identity (Hughes, 1937). However, it is hardly accurate to talk about *one* managerial role. Previous research on manager work (Carlsson, 1951; Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1982; Tengblad, 2002) has showed that the many and different activities connected to manager work must mean several different manager roles and considering the frequent interruptions a manager's typical day at work must mean an immense number of role transitions. Role transitions seem to be an important part of the manager's daily life, but the focus in research has been the activities connected to different roles and not the transitions between them. Attached to every role is a role identity, i.e. a set of goals, values, beliefs etc. Consequently, role transitions thereby should be of importance when it comes to the manager's self-definitions, i.e. his/her identity. Introspective management training means an opportunity to explore different roles, and especially the cognitive and affective layers connected to the roles. Furthermore, it might work as a provider of another manager role or it might mean questioning existing roles.

2.3 Management discourse – an identity source

The talk about management constitutes management discourse. Words do not merely reflect what is being talked about; they actually construct or even constitute that talk (Gabriel et al., 2000). I use discourse as the way in which things are discussed, which could be used to understand underlying assumptions and evasions. The structure of discourse is thereby important in itself as it helps construct meaning, which influences action. Consequently, the content of this chapter concerns talk about management rather than management as an activity, process or function.

2.3.1 The development of management discourse

Management discourse is represented in numerous ways, for example through management training, research literature, practitioner literature, management gurus, management fashions etc. These representations are

discursive resources that help managers to make sense of themselves and their actions (Watson & Bargiela-Chiappini, 1998).

However, as Trollestad (1994) pointed out, the ideology behind this talk can often be contradictory. A manifestation of this contradiction is seen in the dichotomy of management discourse that many researchers have noted (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Brunsson, 1982; Kotter, 1996; Tengblad, 2000a; Waring, 1991).

There has been an academic argument regarding the two different ideologies of control that are considered the basis of this dichotomy (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Tengblad, 2000a), i.e. rational control and normative control. Another manifestation of this dichotomy is the division between management and leadership mentioned in chapter 2.2.1 (Kotter, 1988; 1990). The division is over-simplified, but has a great rhetoric effectiveness, which has made it widely spread mainly in the literature for practitioners (Eriksson & Wåhlin, 1998). Underlying the division often lies a preference for leadership. For example Kotter (1990; 1996) strongly argues for leadership and suggests that leadership has been neglected in favour of management, despite the fact that it should be of most importance for today's managers. His main argument is that leadership is the only way to successfully deal with change, which is one of today's most important management issues.

Even if many researchers agree on the existence of a dichotomy of management discourse, they have different explanations for it and different names for the two sides. The mainstream reading of management history is that management has had a rather linear, progressive development through different phases (e.g. Bendix, 1956). The first phase ending in the late 1800s was about coercive practices (Nelson, 1975). It ended with the early forms of mass production, where utility reasoning (Wren, 1972) became more and more popular. This belief in rationality culminated with Taylor's (1911/1967) scientific management. Weber (1900/1947) published his most important texts during this period as well. This rational view had a great impact then, but it had an even greater impact after the Second World War. At that point Weber's writing became the basis of extensive theorizing (Rövik, 2000). Weber's theorizing of formal organizations and bureaucracy as the optimal form of organizing is probably the one individual concept that has had the greatest impact on research and practice (Rövik, 2000). The third phase was initiated by the early human relation movement (Mayo, 1930), which gained a lot of interest under Levin (1951) in the 1940s and under McGregor (1960) in the 1960s. Since then this form of behaviour

focused control has become gradually more and more influential, which relates to a preference of being a leader (focusing on the relationship to subordinates) and not of being a manager (focusing on the task).

Barley & Kunda (1992) strongly challenge the prevalent notion on how management has developed. They present a dichotomy of management discourse, but instead of a linear, orderly development, they propose that the development of managerial discourse could best be understood as the result of different dominating ideologies. They argue that managerial discourse has developed in waves that have alternated between rational and normative rhetorics. According to the ideology of rational control, the manager should manage on the basis of expertise. Centralised decision-making and specialization are therefore desirable. In the ideology of normative control, influencing the subordinate's attitudes, satisfaction and beliefs are given preference. The manager should be a leader who sets goals and the subordinates are responsible for reaching these goals.

Barley & Kunda (1992) summarize the alternation between ideologies of normative and rational control as in table 2.1.

Table 2.1 The succession of Managerial Ideologies since 1870		
Ideology	*Era of ascent*	*Tenor*
Industrial betterment	1870 – 1900	Normative
Scientific management	1900 – 1923	Rational
Welfare capitalism/human relations	1923 – 1955	Normative
Systems rationalism	1955 – 1980	Rational
Organizational culture	1980 – 1992	Normative

Source: Barley & Kunda, 1992, p. 364

Barley & Kunda (1992) make no valuation of normative or rational control. Brunsson (1982) on the other hand strongly criticises rational control, which he calls "the decision-making perspective". He argues that this perspective tends to create an organization, which is unable to act, as it focuses on analysing different decision alternatives instead of acting. Brunsson (1982) suggests that organizations instead should be controlled through a clear ideology, which creates consensus and stimulates actions. Tengblad (2000a) believes that it is misleading to see the two as contradictory in the way that Brunsson (1982) does, as rational control could also be said to be based on an ideology – the ideology of rationalism.

Another label of the dichotomy comes from Waring (1991), who labels the two sides as the bureaucratic school (related to the ideology of

rational control) and the corporatist school (related to the ideology of normative control). As I have shown earlier, Kotter (1990) argues that leadership (normative control) should be emphasized instead of management (rational control), while Barley & Kunda (1992) make no valuation of the two. Waring (1991) on the other hand believes that the two are both contradictory and complementary at the same time - the yin and yang of management as Tengblad (2000a) puts it.

To sum it up, researchers agree that there exists a dichotomy of management. However, there seem to be three different perspectives on how it has come into being. One is the linear, progressive development of management from rational control to normative control (Bendix 1956; Wren, 1972). Another is a development in waves between the two ideologies (Barley & Kunda, 1992). And a third sees the two as contradictory and complementary at the same time (Waring, 1991). I prefer the view of seeing them as contradictory and complementary at the same time (Waring, 1991), which is in line with seeing the development in waves between the two ideologies. The contradictory/complementary character will create a continuous movement of creating tension and finding balance respectively, which might look like a development in waves.

2.3.2 Swedish discourse of management

Jönsson (1995) and Watson & Bargiela-Chiappini (1998) both find that national discourses of management can have distinctions from the general management discourse, because of different institutional practices and different histories. Therefore this chapter will be devoted to analysing whether there is a specific Swedish management discourse.

The literature that has been used when discussing the dichotomy of discourse in the previous chapter has mainly been based on American material. The question is whether this could be applicable to Sweden and Scandinavia as well. If Barley & Kunda's (1992) thoughts about management discourse development, where it was shown that the period 1955 – 1980 was dominated by a rhetoric of rational control and the period from 1980 – 1992 was dominated by a rhetoric of normative control, are connected with Rövik's (2000) study of the development of management in Scandinavia 1960 – 1996, there are some interesting facts that could be interpreted as a similar dichotomy in the Scandinavian management discourse. Rövik (2000) argues that it was not until the 1980s that management was seen as a business in itself. He states that in

Scandinavia, the 1960s and 1970s could be seen as a "pre-leadership period". To be the head of an organization was the same as to be in control of the members of that organization. During the 1960s, Tayloristic thoughts formed the leader. This could very easily be illustrated by a definition of leadership from Telenor 1963 (Rövik, 2000:210):

Leadership concerns many things, such as a) controlling that work hour rules are obeyed b) controlling the quality and quantity of the work c) controlling material, tools, work routines, sanitary conditions etc.; d) controlling that work instructions, regulations and safety instructions are obeyed e) controlling work drafts and outlines and f) controlling the quantity and development of work. [My translation]

The wording exemplifies the dominating construction of management during this time. It is not a coincidence that the word control dominates the definition. That is why Rövik argues that leadership, in a modern sense, was not discussed until the 1980s. However, it was then that an interest in leadership exploded and leadership programs were one of the most significant management concepts during this time. To use Barley & Kunda's (1992) framework, I argue that the above description of leadership in Telenor in the 1960s represents what Barley & Kunda name rational control, and the interest for leadership that Rövik (2000) describes in the 1980s is leadership based on a normative rhetoric.

The management discourse (-s) can, at least since the 1980s, be seen as a subject of globalization (Rövik, 2000) with a dominating American ideal. However, to investigate whether there, despite globalization, existed a significant Scandinavian management discourse, a large research project on Nordic (Scandinavia + Finland) management was started in Göteborg in the 1990s. The point of departure was the similarity of the cultures in the Nordic countries according to Hofstede's (1980) extensive study on national cultures in work-related issues. However, the researchers soon came to the conclusion that despite a similar set of values, management styles in the Nordic countries were characterized by national differences rather than similarities (Jönsson, 1995). These differences derived from different institutional frameworks based on differences in traditions, experiences and industrial development in the Nordic countries. The focus thereby shifted to describing a Swedish management style. Thus, the main focus was management style, rather than management discourse. However, one of the main findings was that the construction of what was considered to be "good management" strongly influenced the

management styles. The core of what was seen as the ideal was: vision, communication and consensus.

In describing Swedish management, the Swedish managers often distinguished themselves from managers from other countries. By analyzing what they separated themselves *from*, a picture of what is considered as "good management" in Sweden emerged. In short, it could be described as informal, pragmatic and co-operative (Jönsson, 1995).

If this picture of Swedish management is compared to the previous chapter on management discourse and the expectations of management, Swedish management discourse seems more deeply rooted in normative control than in management discourse in general and at present there is a preference of being called a leader rather than a manager (compare Kotter, 1988; 1990), which the following incisive and ironic wording illustrates:

> *The word is leader! You are a management dinosaur when calling yourself manager! No one says manager any more, if you persist in calling yourself manager you only prove that you are not a leader!*
> [My translation] (Berggren & Hedin, 2002, p. 37)

Jönsson (1995) concludes that the Swedish management style has good prospects, as these humanistic ingredients are requested both internationally (Porter & McKibbin, 1988; Whetten & Cameron, 1991) and in Sweden (Beckérus et al, 1988), but Sandberg (2001) argues that the humanistic influences in management mainly seem to be rhetorical, with less impact on the practice of management. However, regardless of impact or not, the humanistic influence is still an important part of the construction of Swedish management discourse.

National culture and the set of values that come from national culture is one important aspect of understanding management discourse. However, nationally inherited institutional factors are also of importance (Jönsson, 1995; Watson & Bargiela-Chiappini, 1998). So is industrial development, as it tends to create different "generations" of leaders (Jönsson, 1995 & 1996). Managers seem to be carriers of some recipes of what is considered as good management, and these recipes vary from generation to generation. Jönsson (1995, 1996) describes this as a sedimentation of experience, which influences management styles. These sedimentations of experience are also important parts (or effects) of the management discourse. The present humanistic dominance in management discourse in Sweden is a rather new phenomenon. There seems to have been a shift

during the 1980s from an ideal of managers as experts (Edström et al, 1985) to the present ideal of informal co-operative leadership (Jönsson, 1995).

2.3.3 Implications for the research problem

Management discourse helps managers to make sense of themselves and their actions. Thus, it influences managers' identity processes. There is a dichotomy in the management discourse based on different forms of control: rational control and normative control. Rational control has always dominated the discourse, but there seems to be a strong rhetoric preference for normative control right now, and it is especially strong in Sweden. Consequently, even if management discourse mainly serves as a help in defining oneself as manager, it can also be contradictory and confusing. However, there are also other conflicting discourses that managers might be part of, which further complicates the identity process. These conflicting discourses will be the focus of the next chapter.

2.4 Restraining management discourse

The generalized others (Mead, 1934/1975) represent our notions of groups that we feel part of and that are important for our self-definition. Being manager and thereby being a part of management discourse is only one of them. We are parts of other discourses as well. Some of them co-exist in harmony with management discourse, while others are in direct conflict with management discourse. In this chapter the focus will be on three discourses and social constructions that according to previous research could be in conflict with and restrain management discourse: the discourses of professional workers, the social constructions of women and the work/life balance.

2.4.1 Professional worker

Professions, professionals and professional work have long been of interest to academics (Parsons, 1954; Blau & Scott, 1962; Larson, 1977 & 1990; Tolbert & Barley, 1991). The term profession springs from Latin, and means an occupation with a long education[18].

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[18] In its wider sense professional worker is used for any kind of expert or specialist. Mintzberg (1979 & 1983) argues that there is a lot to gain by having your job labeled "professional", as it tends to increase

Most often profession is connected to occupations that require some kind of authorization, with regulations on who can practice this work. Professionals use procedures that are difficult to learn, but are well defined, which gives a strange mixture of complexity and stability. The work is complex, but the procedures create stability. The prescribed procedures come from science, so the difficulties are connected to making the diagnosis. When the diagnosis has been made, "science determines" which treatment should be used.

In that sense, the term professional worker in its traditional use is hardly applicable to manager. Manager is not a profession in the sense that it requires an authorization[19], and in its wider sense professional worker is often defined in opposition to managers, which derives from the view that you either make a career as a specialist (professional worker) or a hierarchical career (manager). Furthermore, professional work is standardized even if professional workers have to handle many different standards (consequently, standardized does not mean easy), while managerial work is typically the least standardized in the organization (compare chapter 2.2 on managerial work).

From an organizational point of view, professional jobs are generally referred to as complex jobs that are specialized horizontally but not vertically (Mintzberg, 1979 & 1983), i.e. in direct opposition to the view of the manager as a hierarchical position. The reason is the complexity of professional work, as the complexity makes hierarchical specialization and formalization less useful.

However, leadership is sometimes considered as more of a horizontal activity in contrast to management, which is based on hierarchical thinking (Eriksson & Wåhlin, 1998). This might create a vaguer picture, where managers and professionals are not held separately as suggested in the early literature on professional work (where the professionals are seen as not "manageable"). Dent & Whitehead (2002) claim that the relationships between professionals and managers have changed, but

the status and reduce the imposed controls. Watson (2002) states that the concepts of "profession" and "professionalism" have lost their power as analytical resources. Instead, as the concepts are widely used by the practitioners, it is equally interesting to understand how they create meaning connected to the concepts, i.e. what are the common sense notions about them? Accordingly, professions and professionalism could be treated as topics rather than analytical resources.

[19] In fact, Rövik (2000) argues that for a long time manager was not seen as a profession in itself at all. Rather it was an extension of the activity that was managed. Expertise in the area was the main criteria for becoming a manager. Being a manager in the car industry meant knowing a lot about cars and the car industry; it did not say anything about the capacity to lead people.

there is no consensus on "to what" according to Cohen et al (2002), only that the early writings on this relationship are no longer applicable. They call for research that addresses three main issues:

1. The individual's active sense making and responses to work situations within the increasingly varied organizational contexts.
2. The system of professions, and especially the position of management in relation to this, as either outside or inside the system.

This study addresses both issues, as three of the managers are veterinarians. They are professional workers, but they are also managers. Their individual sense making is in focus as they through introspection are encouraged to make sense of their managerial situation. Being a professional worker and a manager raises dilemmas as they are based on different, and in many cases conflicting and contrary ideologies, which might create tension in their occupational identities and roles. The individualism connected to professions is complicated. On the one hand, individualism has always been considered particularly strong in professional workers. Organizations dominated by professional workers are generally seen as a group of loosely connected individuals and not a tightly slimmed collective. On the other hand, individualism has always been subordinate to membership of the profession. Consequently, it makes a great difference whether the individualism is related to the organization or the profession. Being both a manager and a professional worker creates tensions. Will they be loyal to their profession or to the organization, if they have to choose? Having a managerial (organizational) career could be considered as not being loyal to the profession.

2.4.2 Woman and manager

In an ethnographic study of managers Watson & Harris (1999) noticed that being a woman and a manager seemed problematic, as the women saw their gender as marking them as atypical. They found that while all managers have some identity work to do in "becoming managers", it seemed to be additional work for women in reconciling being "a woman" with being "a manager".

The problem that Watson & Harris (1999) noticed has been theoretically explained by feminist theories that regard management as synonymous with male gender perceptions (Kanter, 1977; Calás & Smircich, 1991;

Collinson & Hearn, 1994). Gender identity is a social construction[20], just as an identity as manager. It is not an object, but a continuing process of negotiation (Simon, 1995). Beauvoir's (1949/2002) statement that *"you are not born a woman, you become a woman"* illustrates this view. Within the dominant management research there is conformity between the construction of management and the construction of masculinity. As men and women are defined as opposites, the conformity between the constructions of manager and man makes the construction of femininity seem as an opposite to the construction of management. Consequently, the identity as woman and the identity as manager seem to be in conflict when they are evoked at the same time. Holgersson (2003) argues that women managers have to balance between contradictory ideals. Some adapt male managers' behaviour and thereby gain by being viewed as competent, but they are seen as mannish, which is regarded as negative. Female managers who choose to act differently are seen as divergent and less competent as managers.

Lipman-Blumen (1976) and Kanter (1977) brought in homosociality, i.e. that we tend to identify with individuals that we perceive as similar to ourselves, as an explanation for conformity among managers. Lipmen-Blumen (1976) connected homosociality to gender structure (men choose other men, and gender structure gives women a subordinate position in relation to men), while Kanter (1977) connected it to organizational structure (men hold the important positions in organizations today and tend to choose other men to join them, i.e. the argument is that if women would hold the important positions the situation would be the opposite).

Women who are in male dominated environments tend to use different strategies. Lindgren (1992) describes four different strategies that women use to deal with the situation.
1. They show that they are loyal to men and they deny inequalities between the sexes.
2. They exaggerate their femininity and take the roles of mother, mascot, seducer etc.

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[20] Within gender research the word social constructivist has a slightly different tenor, compared to social constructivist in general. In general, social constructivists see the world as socially constructed, but that is a point of departure and not a valuation as good or bad. In gender research there is a bit of "hope" attached to social construction, because implicitly it says "not true", "possible to change" (Czarniawska, 2003). Considering the feminist theory as a critical theory, i.e. it aims at revealing taken-for-granted assumptions to achieve change, the social construction becomes the opposite of biological gender, which says "determined", "not possible to change". Thereby social construction in a way becomes a means in the "agenda for change".

3. They do not compete through taking part-time jobs or jobs without career possibilities
4. They start to question the situation, at the expense of being perceived as rabid and held up as ridicule

The first three strategies are strategies to fit in, but without real influence, while the fourth creates conflicts, but still creates difficulties when wishing to have influence.

Eriksson (2000) argues that gender identity is only one of several identities, and that identity is full of nuances and is socially influenced. She uses Somers (1994), who sees gender identity as only one aspect of identity and thereby criticize the mainstream feminist identity theories which focus exclusively on gender identity, and Ely (1995), who sees gender identity mainly as an aspect of social identity, i.e. that women attach to their membership in the category "female".

Three of the managers in the study are women and the introspective management training might evoke a feeling of conflict between being both a manager and a woman. As Watson & Harris (1999) suggest, women managers need additional identity work to build a manager identity. The introspective management training might support this identity work or evoke a conflict between identities that the managers have not been aware of before.

2.4.3 Work/life balance

A matter closely related to the difficulties for women to create a manager identity is the work/life balance. The difficulties to make work as manager fit with the rest of life are evident for most managers (Cooper, 1981), but especially for women considering their expected bigger responsibility at home and regarding family. Marshall (1995) even showed that several senior women managers who had left their jobs did that to regain some kind of balance in their lives.

Carlsson (1951) and Mintzberg (1973) were concerned about managers' heavy work load after their studies on managerial work. In Carlsson's (1951) study, an average working day for a top manager lasted 11.4 hours. In Tengblad's (2002) study, the already high figure had risen to 12.2 hours. It is no wonder that managers have problems with finding a work/life balance.

There seems to be a new form of psychological contracts that are evolving, where managers accept to work as long as it takes to complete their task, but expect greater flexibility and autonomy concerning working hours in return (Vielba, 1995). Watson & Harris (1999) notice similarly that managers tend to see their "contract" rather as "doing whatever it takes" than "working x hours a week". The dark side of this is long hours and working late, which inevitably means risking burnout, stress and difficulties to keep up a satisfactory balance between work and other aspects of life. These matters are potentially damaging for personal health and well-being and for relationships and family life. Furthermore, in many work organizations long hours and working late are part of the culture, which separate the committed from the non-committed and less suited for the job (Kunda, 1992; Watson, 2001). Consequently, working a lot and sacrificing one's family is in line with the manager identity, so keeping a work/life balance is difficult.

Work/life balance is one of the most important issues in introspective management training. However, the conditions of managerial work are challenging when it comes to finding a balance between work and private life. Furthermore, working a lot seems closely related to a manager identity, so finding a work/life balance will probably not be easy.

2.4.4 Implications for the research problem

Previously I argued that introspective management training would mean identity work and mainly be manifested in an identity process. While management discourse, despite its contradictions, could serve as a resource for establishing a manager identity, this chapter has shown that the fact that three of the managers are professional workers and three of the managers are women might confuse the identity process and make it more difficult as the discourses of professional workers and the construction of femininity to some extent seem to be in conflict with management discourse. Furthermore, the work/life balance, which is in focus in introspective management training, seems to be hard to combine with manager identity. The question is how these probable conflicting discourses might influence the manager's identity process.

2.5 The manager and the organization – a complex relation

Being a manager means organizational obligations of different kinds. The relation between the manager and the organization is manifested in

different ways and is an important part of a manager's sensemaking process. The most obvious manifestation of the relation is the formal relation regarding duties and responsibilities manifested in the manager position, which will be discussed shortly in chapter 2.5.1. Position has a static character and is thereby limited as a description of the relation over time. Then the concept of career is more useful, as the career path is seen as the negotiation between individual and organization over time (Barley, 1989). Career will be described in chapter 2.5.3. However, the formal contract between the individual and the organization is not the only contract that influences the manager's behaviour and self-definition. According to Watson (2001), it is not even the most influential contract. He suggests that there is an implicit, psychological contract that is much stronger in the process of the manager's sense-making of him-/herself and his/her work. The implicit contract is based upon the manager's own social construction of the leadership situation, i.e. his/her direct relations to subordinates and the task in relation to the situational context. The leadership situation will be discussed in chapter 2.5.2. Furthermore, the implicit contract is influenced by relations that go beyond the leadership situation's "here-and-now" characteristics. Organizational culture influences the informal structure of the organization and it serves as a social memory and creates expectations that go beyond "here-and-now". Organizational culture will be discussed in chapter 2.5.4 in relation to organizational identity and organizational membership.

2.5.1 The position

Manager is a position in a given hierarchical structure, which gives the person holding the position power and authority to represent the interests of the employer. Barnard (1938/1968) calls this authority of position in his early work on the functions of the executive. Fayol's (1916) description of the administrative work of the manager has the same point of departure. I find it important to emphasize that manager is a position, but not *only* a position. A position does not include the earlier mentioned fact (Watson, 1998) that the managers are individuals, with their own specific needs and characteristics. Defining manager as only a position represents a structural perspective (Bolman & Deal, 1997), i.e. it does not take into account human individuality or diversity. Instead the structure of the organization is the point of departure and the structure is then "filled" with individuals.

In this study, which has the manager as a human being as point of departure, the manager as a position will not be the main focus. Rather,

position will be treated as a part of the situational characteristics of the managerial situation, which as such influences the relations to other people in the organization and also the content of the work, i.e. it will indirectly influence the manager's self-definition. A position and the responsibilities connected to it are often discussed as if it was something objective and clear-cut, but that is an oversimplification. Rather human individuality makes it diverse as it is the manager's own social constructions of the responsibility that create actions (Johansson, 1998). The leadership situation is consequently a social construction created by the managers themselves in negotiation with people connected to it. The leadership situation will be the focus of the next part.

2.5.2 The leadership situation

The context of managing was for a long time neglected in research on management, and leadership was treated as something that a person possessed. Consequently, much of the early research in the 1930s – 1950s was focused on the leader's "traits"[21] in an attempt to identify the characteristics that clearly could distinguish successful from unsuccessful leaders. As the trait perspective is one of the most important perspectives in personality research, an interpretation of this is that the aim of the research was to find the personality best suited for leadership. As a personality tends to be rather stable over a life-cycle this indicated that leaders were "born rather than made", according to House & Aditya (1997). The research efforts did not bring any clear result, as traits that correlated with success in one situation often failed in another, and traits that seemed to work for one leader became the failure of another. Gibbs (1969) argues that it was from the failure of this kind of research that the definition of leadership as a *relationship* between the leader, the followers and the task/situational characteristics was constructed. The research efforts gradually turned their focus from the leader as a person to the leadership situation. Some researchers even argue that we should leave the person completely and instead focus on the situations in order to develop leadership. For example Fiedler (1996) argues that as we only can influence a person's intellect or personality marginally we should emphasize the selection of leaders more and leadership development should focus on designing leadership situations that make optimal use of the leaders' abilities. Regardless of how far we choose to take the

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[21] "Traits" is an empirical perspective within personality psychology, where different personality characteristics are defined empirically. These characteristics are then theorized to heavily influence behaviour across time and situations. Different personality types are mainly developed from this perspective.

argument, most researchers today see leadership as a closely integrated process between the leader and the leadership situation.

Schein (1994) identifies the most important components of a leadership situation as subordinates' characteristics, the leader's characteristics and the task/situational characteristics. Even if there are measurable properties of personality, in line with the leader trait research discussed previously, the strongest influence on the leadership situation is the leader's *perceptions* of the subordinates, him- or herself and the task/situation. The leader's actual traits influence all these perceptions. From all these perceptions the leader interprets the leadership situation, which will influence his/her actions. Consequently, the social constructions will vary from leader to leader although the leadership situations for an outsider seem to be similar. Different constructions will create different actions.

Schein's (1994) description of the leadership situation is an over-simplification. The situational characteristics include such diverse issues as the organization in itself, the organizational environment and the more abstract institutional environment and managerial discourse etc. However, it captures the two dimensions of people and tasks in the managerial job, which have gained a lot of attention in management research (e.g. Blake & Mouton's (1969) Managerial grid and the contingency approach to this division as in Hersey & Blanchard (1988)).

Introspective management training focuses on the manager's self-perception. Consequently, it will influence the managers' perceptions of themselves, their subordinates and the task and situational characteristics. However, there are relations other than those to the subordinates that are important. Most managers are subordinate to a manager themselves, and they have relations to peers and other functions in the organizations. The characters of these relations are included in the situational characteristics of the leadership situation.

The manager identity is created in relation to the people around the managers. The managers' perceptions of their leadership situations will influence the relations to the people around them. Consequently, introspective management training might influence both the managers' perceptions of their leadership situations and themselves in relation to and as a part of the leadership situation.

2.5.3 The career

Holt Larsen (1985) believes that manager development is inevitably connected to career, as management training is supposed to develop the manager, which might make him or her aspire for a new position. The changes of positions over time constitute a career path. To understand managers and the influence of management training, it is important to understand their careers and their own and others' views of their careers.

Making a career is a natural part of a manager's life. Chandler (1977) even argues that the coming of managerial careers was one of the main explanations why managers captured such a strong position in the development of American industry. The manager became the visible hand that substituted Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market forces. The managers went through life along a well-defined career pattern – "climbing the ladder" – and they thereby saw themselves and were recognized by others as a new and distinct business class.

An understanding of the concept of career took a big step forward in the 1970s, when researchers in organizational behaviour began to show an interest in the subject (Hall, 1976; Schein 1978; Van Maanen, 1977). The organizational behaviour influence became the basis of an important change in the view of the career concept in the beginning of the 1980s, when "career management" was introduced in writing (Kotter et al, 1978) and in management development classes. This prompted major changes in organizational practices (Arthur et al, 1989) as careers came to be looked on as the products of individual-organization negotiations instead of predestined by high-level human resource planners. Consequently, managers in particular, but employees overall, became more actively involved in their own careers. Barley (1989) suggests that the Chicago school of sociology (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969) is indirectly the basis of recent views on career as it offers an understanding of person-role interaction over time.

However, the view of career as a negotiation between the individual and the organization is not unproblematic. Dalton (1989) argues that even if the possibilities for individual growth in organizations are great, organizations can also be dangerous, especially if we think that they can "deliver". Organizations only exist in our minds and they are made up of individuals who might not be around to fulfil the implied promises at some point in the future. Czarniawska (1997) argues that the view of the organization as a meta-person (*one* strong decision-maker, *one* will etc,

personified in a manager or a manager group) is so deeply rooted that the metaphorical nature has nearly been forgotten. Organizations have no minds and no perceived responsibilities. Too many individuals enter the organization with the belief that if they work hard, the organization will take care of them (Dalton, 1989), but individuals must take responsibility for managing their own careers (Hall, 1976). Hall (1976) recommends individuals to try to clarify their strengths and interests as well as their current opportunities. Dalton (1989) concludes that even if people tend to take more and more responsibility for their own careers, the organization is sometimes still believed to be a care-taker of careers.

Another important aspect of the career concept is what Hughes (1958) calls turning points, i.e. the transition of one occupational role to another. Career can be conceptualized as a series of transitions from one role to another within an organizational or occupational social system (Barley, 1989). An understanding of these transitions is central to an understanding of career, as they are such an important part of career paths (Trice & Morand, 1989).

These transitions of occupational roles could take place within an organization, but today it is just as common that it involves moving from one organization to another (Lindgren et al, 2001). However, Arthur et al. (1996) and Weick (1996) argue that these career steps are mainly studied from an organizational point of view, i.e. as an organizational problem (of losing an employee) or an organizational opportunity (gaining an employee). The individual career is seldom chosen as the research entity.

In this study the manager is the research entity. The participation in introspective management training might influence the managers' views of themselves and their careers. Career as a manifestation of the individual-organizational relation over time is therefore interesting. Especially as introspective management training focuses exclusively on the individual.

Schein (1993) describes career as anchored in a small number of constant elements in an individual's self-perception. These career anchors are so central that they decide which employment is deemed acceptable. Lindgren et al (2001) see the view of career anchors as too superficial. If the career anchor view is used, the interesting thing is what the anchor is anchored in, which they argue must be the identity. If introspective management training is mainly manifested in an identity process, the anchor might come off and the managers' view and perceptions of themselves and their careers might change.

2.5.4 Organizational identity, culture and membership

Managers are part of organizations and there is an ongoing interaction between the two parts. In an organizational context (or rather in any social context), the individual identity is not the only level of identity, there is also for example group identity and organizational identity.

Albert (1998) sees organizational identity[22] as a metaphor and a construction. He argues that organizational identity is based on a question, a reflexive question: Who am I? What kind of an organization or company are we? Identity is the answer to this question. However, this reflexive question might suggest that identity is only an ingoing process. The early theorizing of organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Dutton & Dukerich; Alvesson & Björkman, 1992) treated organizational identity mainly as an in-going process, i.e. what the members of the organization consider to be the most characteristic and central qualities. However, later research (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998; Fiol et al, 1998) has clarified that there is an outgoing process as well, since the question "Who am I?" is always answered in relation to a social system of meaning, i.e. often labeled as a culture.

Albert (1998) claims that identity works on many different levels, i.e. group, department and organization. A redefinition of individual identity often leads to redefining groups, organizations and other social contexts you are a part of. In fact Jenkins (1996) argues that some parts of identity we share with others. He labels this social identity in contrast to individual identity, which is "our own". He claims that it is an accepted view in behavioural sciences that people have "two types" of identities, but that we know very little about how they interact. Social identity is about who we are in relation to others, which is an on-going process of agreement and disagreement, i.e. an ongoing negotiation that creates meaning.

Organizational identity is closely related to organization culture, and could be said to constitute the aspect of culturally embedded sense-

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[22] When talking about organizational identity I believe that it is important to be aware of the fact that we are using metaphors (Morgan, 1986) According to Czarniawska (1997), one limitation with using only metaphor theory to understand organizational identity is the risk of objectifying organizational identity. Czarniawska (2000) emphasizes that identities are not something that we *have*, we *establish* them in relation to others. One way to avoid this risk is by using constructivism and instead focuses on action nets, which would imply handling organiz*ing* instead of organiz*ation* and thereby give identity a more processual character.

making that is self-focused (Fiol et al., 1998). It defines who we are in relation to a larger system of meaning to which we belong.

The difference between identity and culture is thereby a difference in perspective (Fiol et al., 1998). Identity exists on numerous levels and on each level it is defined in relation to the existing culture or to the social systems of meaning around it, which is illustrated in figure 2.1, where examples of social systems of meaning that could influence the identity process on the individual level or another level are shown. Each level has its dominating social systems of meaning, but the common characteristic is that it always answers the question "Who are we?" in relation to larger contexts of meaning.

Figure 2.1 Identity and culture
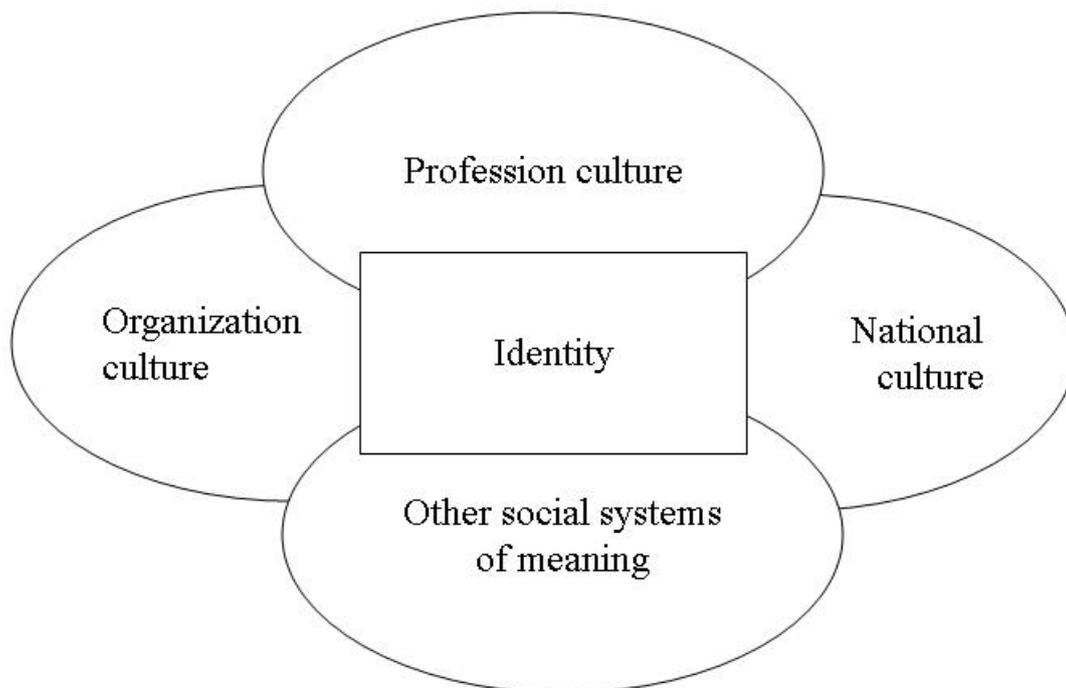
Idea from Fiol et al (1998)

Fiol et al. (1998) claim that organizational identity could help researchers to access organizational culture. As identity reflects how a social entity makes sense of itself in relation to the culture it is a part of, it represents the linkage between observable manifestations of culture (which otherwise researchers tend to interpret rather subjectively) and underlying meanings. By focusing on the language and behaviour that indicate how

people define themselves in relation to a culture, researchers may also gain better access to these systems of meaning themselves.

An organizational culture is defined by people's understanding of the social system to which they belong, including the everyday life of a group of people that define and help sustain what they consider as normal, necessary and valuable (Hatch, 1993). It provides a context for meaning and sense-making, that is historically developed and socially maintained (Geertz, 1973).[23]

Alvesson (2002) points out that management is partly a cultural phenomenon and must be analyzed within a given cultural, political and socio-economic context. I agree and would like to add that it is the same with managers. There is a continuous interaction between the culture (-s) and the manager (-s). As much as the culture forms the manager, the manager influences the culture. People live in different cultures, but they are also the bearers of culture, i.e. people are both creators and products of culture.

Baum (1990) considers organizational membership as a closely related concept to both organizational culture and organizational identity. He argues that there has always been a potential mismatch between who is on the payroll and who becomes a member of the organization. Organizational membership is not about being employed or not, it is about identity and how well the member's identity matches the organizational identity. This is expressed through a negotiating process between veterans and newcomers in the organization (Baum, 1990). However, that is not enough; identity is only one part of the membership. Membership work is also about showing your contribution to the organization.

Baum (1990) argues that we tend to neglect the question about what individuals expect from their workplaces. He believes that the most important theme is that people try to use work organizations to grow as persons. Similarly Erikson (1968) suggests that people go to work and

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[23] This view of culture is closely related to the original, anthropological use of the term. However, in much writing a pragmatic view of culture is used, which often means an objectification of culture, i.e. organizational culture is something that an organization *has* and thereby could manage and shape as they wish. Barley & Kunda (1992) argue that the basis for this was the work of consultants and applied researchers who wrote primarily for practitioners in the beginning of the 1980s. They had a more pragmatic view: developing "strong" cultures constituted a way of enhancing competitiveness. The pragmatic view of culture as the magic tool for managing the organization is a simplification that has been proven wrong and it is hardly of any use to me. However, the original, anthropological view of culture as an important part of the construction of meaning for people still makes sense.

work organizations to carry out a series of developmental tasks. However, Baum (1990) argues that there are many people who go to work and are on the payroll without obtaining growth or feeling part of the organization.

Managers influence and are influenced by organization culture and they are a part of the process of organizational identity. Furthermore, they perform membership work, both regarding their own membership and regarding their subordinates as organizational representatives.

2.5.5 Implications for the research problem

The different relations between manager and organization are neither clear-cut nor easy to understand. Rather they are manifested in many different ways; all influencing the managers' sense-making process and identity process.

Managerial activities are performed in a context consisting of direct relations with other people, direct and indirect relations to the organization, which are all embedded in discourses of management and organizational life. The context of managing influences the shaping of the manager's identity.

The introspective management training never comes in direct contact with the managers' organizations. However, there is no such thing as human nature independent of culture (Geertz, 1973). Human beings create different types of cultures, which in turn create different types of human beings (Anderson, 1995b), but cultures are still creations. People are both creators and bearers of culture. Consequently, the managers bring culture into management training. Furthermore, role-plays and other sessions are performed with the managers' organizations as imagined contexts and counterparts.

The relation between manager and organization might be challenged in different ways as introspective management training focuses exclusively on the manager as an individual. Furthermore, as the introspective management training was argued to mainly manifest itself in an identity process, daily life in the organizations will influence the identity process between the course weeks, partly by "direct relations" to people and tasks "here-and-now" represented by the leadership situation and partly by the more abstract or "indirect relations" of organizational culture, which go beyond "here-and-now". People customarily talk about "the culture", as if

it was a single, tangible object "out there" (Collins, 1989). Culture is discourse-sensitive - how we conceptualize culture depends upon discourses, which construct it in conflicting, often contradictory ways. Introspective management training also means meeting a new discourse, personal growth discourse, which might influence the conceptualization of organizational culture.

2.6 Final problem formulation and aim of the thesis

The general problem formulation was stated as: *How does off-site introspective management training influence practicing managers?* Following from the general problem the general aim is to *develop an increased understanding of how off-site introspective management training influences practicing managers.*

The problem development chapter has shown that being a manager means diversity in several ways. This diversity makes attempts of cause-and-effect studies of introspective management training inappropriate. Instead the different parts of the problem development chapter have been attempts to understand the diversity of being a manager, and to understand the "addition to this basic diversity" that participation in introspective managerial training involves.

The implications for the research problem that have evolved through developing the different parts of the general research problem can be divided into three main areas.

Firstly, there is the manifestation of introspective management training in the managers' identity processes. Managers are persons, who have a certain occupation. Already Barnard (1938/1968) pointed out that a prerequisite for understanding what it means to be a manager is to understand what it means to be a person, which is not easy, but it will have to be further elaborated in the theoretical framework in chapter three. For now we can settle with the fact that the manager is a *human being* who performs *managerial work*. This work is being performed in a *context* of leadership situations, organization and different discourses. The manager is both being shaped by and is shaping the work and the context.

For a manager managerial life is one of the social contexts where social identity is created and maintained. Hughes (1958) suggests that working life in general and organizational life in particular are central sources of self-definition, i.e. sources of the social identity process. An important

part of the social identity process is the individuals we identify with (Ashforth, 1998), which is why group affiliation is essential in this process (Tajfel, 1972; Turner, 1982). Such groups could be organizations (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998; Alvesson & Björkman, 1992; see also previous chapter 2.5) or people belonging to the same profession (manager for example).

Consequently, introspective management training means an opportunity to study managers' identity work in general, but also under the influence of this particular training.

Secondly, role transitions seem to be an important part of managers' daily lives because of the nature of managerial work. Role transitions mean changing between social worlds and thereby should be influential in the identity process as well. Furthermore, introspective management training might serve as a provider of yet another manager role, which might create even more role transitions. Thus, role transitions will be the second focus of the study.

Thirdly, the manager – organization interaction, which is complex even without introspective management training, will be further challenged as the training exclusively focuses on the manager as an individual. The many manifestations of the relation between manager and organization, such as position, career, leadership situation and interpretations of organizational culture might be influenced by the managers' identity process. Furthermore, the organization will through direct and indirect relations influence the managers' identity process as well. The ongoing negotiation between individual and organization will probably be influenced by the managers' participation in introspective management training.

On the basis of these three identified areas, the general aim has been translated to the following researchable sub aims:

1. To describe the managers' identity work during their participation in introspective management training.
2. To describe the role of the managers' role transitions in participating in introspective management training and in identity work.
3. To describe the development of the relation between the participating managers and their organizations during their participation in introspective management training.

To be able to follow the managers extensively the study is limited to one training and six managers from this training. This is complemented with interviews with three managers who had participated earlier, in order to better understand possible long-term experiences.

3. INFLUENCES OF MANAGERS' IDENTITY WORK

Early in the text I took the position of seeing the manager as in an ongoing *process of becoming*. The process of becoming means an ongoing *interaction* with the context, the managers are both shaping and are shaped by the context. The context means the world outside ourselves, but the context only becomes a "reality" when we can connect it to our own life through language, i.e. when it has been *socially constructed* through our interpretation using language. This notion has its origin in the Thomas theorem - "*If men define situations as real, they become real in their consequences*". Thomas' (1923/1951) definition of the situation is simple, but still one of the most profound social psychological concepts. The implications are far-reaching. In essence, it really does not matter if something is "true" or not, if we define it as such and then live as if it were, then it "becomes true".

The point of departure presented here, i.e. that the world is socially constructed and becomes "real" by human interpretation through language, will have consequences for my choice of theoretical perspective and method. The theoretical perspective will be presented here in chapter 3 and the considerations regarding method will be presented in chapter 4.

3.1 Symbolic interactionism as theoretical perspective

The humanistic/existentialistic perspective, briefly presented in chapter 2.1.4 as the implicit theoretical base of personal development in general as well as of the specific management training program followed in this study, has two major weaknesses that makes it inappropriate as a theoretical framework in my study. Firstly, the humanistic/existentialistic perspective's unquestioned belief in one part of the self as "truer" than other parts of the self is a *belief* and nothing else. Allport (1961; 1968) argues that theories in the domains of psychology and social psychology must approach the philosophical question about what it means to be a human being, which is a very complex and to a large extent an unanswerable question. At least the answer is not testable so it would be grounded in a belief. Because how could we know when we have reached the "true self"? When removing the mask (Goffman, 1990) of the experienced unauthentic self, we might just as well reach another mask of unauthentic self and then another one in an endless row. We would never know whether we had reached the true self or not (Asplund, 1987), as all masks are just different presentations of the self (Goffman, 1990). The

problem is similar with the criticism Wildavsky (1976) formulated against the reformist movement. The reformists' argument is that it is impossible to know what is optimal, but we can at least reform to continuously be better and better and thereby come closer and closer to the optimal. Wildavsky (1976) countered by asking how could you know that you are coming closer to the optimal if you do not know what the optimal is? If you do not know what is up and down, how do you then know that the reforms are rightly directed? The reforms might just as well take you in the wrong direction. The argument works just as well for the humanistic/existentialistic perspective's search for the "authentic" self (Rogers, 1961) or for self-actualization (Maslow, 1968). How can we know when we have reached the "true self" and how can we even know that our search is heading in the right direction?

The second weakness with the humanistic/existentialistic perspective as a theoretical framework for this study is the treatment of the self as something stable that can be pinned down and discovered (Watson, 2001), an approach which the humanistic/existentialistic perspective shares with most other perspectives within psychology and social psychology[24]. This view does not go very well with my point of departure to see the world as socially constructed. From a social constructivist view the "true self" becomes "true" if we perceive it as true and act as if it was true. To even talk about a true self would thereby be an oxymoron as the "true self" would change over time when we change our perception of what is true (compare with previous notion on the Thomas theorem, 1923/1951) and between different situations. Consequently, a social constructivist view requires a view of the self that allows the self to change.

A perspective within social psychology that meets these two requirements and furthermore is the perspective with the most evident roots in the view of "reality" as socially constructed is symbolic interactionism. The interactionist perspective[25] foremost based on the work by Mead

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[24]All theorizing in the fields of psychology and social psychology have one major problem and that is they must have an approach to the human inner world, which is abstract and hard to describe and no one is able to prove the "true" description. Thus, choosing a perspective from which to understand a problem in this domain concerns deciding which is the most useful rather than of which is the "truest" perspective. Hoyle et al (1999) claim that all perspectives within the field have strengths and weaknesses. For an easily accessible general presentation on the strengths and weaknesses of the different perspectives, see Friedman & Schustack (1999).

[25] Symbolic interactionism has divided into two different schools since Mead (1934/1975). I follow Blumer (1969) who represents the Chicago School, which is critical to "cause-and-effect studies" and relies mainly on qualitative, interpretative research. The other school is called the Iowa School and is much more traditionalistic when it comes to method and uses mainly quantitative research. The most well-known researcher within the Iowa School is Kuhn (1964).

(1934/1975) and Cooley (1902), and further elaborated by Blumer (1969), is grounded in the idea that the self is created in interaction with others, which could be described as a form of on-going negotiation. Within symbolic interactionism, researchers are interested in how persons and social contexts are constructed through interaction. To regard the self as merely a knowledge structure or information processor (as for example the human information processor school does (Driver et al., 1967)) is to overlook the crucial interpersonal functions of the self. Interpersonal functions are essential as the basic human need for meaning is met through autobiographical narratives, which are part of a negotiation between the idea of the self and the external world (Baumeister, 1999).

Consequently, interaction is essential in interactionism, but the interaction must not necessarily be "physical". Interactionists see inner processes of interaction as just as important as "real" interaction. Mead's (1934/1975) view of the self is that the self contains two parts, "I" and "me". "I" is the spontaneous part of us and "me" is the social self that holds the "I" back. There is a continuous interaction between "I" and "me", where "me" exercises social control on the actions of "I". "Me" is a kind of social memory of the previous actions of "I". There is no contradiction between control performed by others and "self-control" performed by "me", they are both parts of the shaping of the self. Actually they could even be seen as the same, as "me" represents what Mead (in Strauss, 1934/1964) calls the generalized others, i.e. the social group we identify with and from which we perceive values, norms and expectations that create the self. Mead (1934/1975) argues that the self develops from social interaction, where role-taking (Strauss, 1934/1964) is an important part, i.e. we take the roles of others and look upon our self "through their eyes" in order to construct and transform our self. In this way "me" transforms slowly and is the part of the self that is always present and consequently the part that is "visible". "I" only exists instantaneously. The generalized others represent our conception of the world and they influence how we define a situation (Strauss, 1934/1964).

The generalized others bring in a dimension, which makes symbolic interactionism unique among perspectives within social psychology. The core of social psychology is the nature of the relationship between the person and the social world (Watson, 1996). All perspectives within social psychology deal with the person, the social context and the relationship between them, but the perspectives differ in the view of these three concepts. To put it simply, we could see social psychology as a continuum between individual and social context and different perspectives are located at different places on this continuum

dependening on whether their focus is more on the person or the social context (Svensson, 1992). The symbolic interactionism can at a first glance seem rather narrow and mainly occupied with direct interaction with others[26]. Thus, the focus is "here-and-now". However, the concept of the generalized other brings in a social context that goes way beyond the "here-and-now"-situation. In the problem development chapter, I emphasized that the perception of being a manager was influenced by both the immediate context "here-and-now" (interaction with subordinates, peers, superior managers etc.) and the more abstract context that goes beyond "here-and-now" (management discourse, organization culture etc). Consequently, I find symbolic interactionism as the most appropriate perspective to understand the ongoing "becoming process" of managers.

3.1.1 Bringing in emotions

There is one problem with symbolic interactionism based upon Mead (1934/1975). Namely, that Mead (1934/1975) never discussed emotions explicitly. Considering that this type of management training mainly differs from other management training in its strong focus on experiences and emotions instead of cognitive factors (Conger, 2001), emotions must be integrated in the framework. However, even if Mead (1934/1975) did not discuss emotions explicitly in his framework, he cleared the path for doing so. With the spontaneous, uncontrolled "I" and the "me" that is reflective, directing and monitoring, Hochschild (1983) argues that the scene is already set for how interaction could enter the process of defining feeling. If feeling is the spontaneous outburst, emotion is the social label of it. The social interaction of gestures (as tears, crying etc) may not only express feelings, but define them as well, depending on how our social context reacts to them. Hochschild (1983) clarifies that emotions are social, but they are also related to cognition, as cognition is involved in the process by which emotions "signal" messages to the individual. When emotions signal something to us, the signal depends on our prior expectations. Consequently, social contexts influence emotions in two ways; firstly, the social context "helps" us to define the emotion we have (and if it is appropriate) "here-and-now" and secondly, through our prior expectations and our preferences it influences the way emotions signal messages to us, beyond "here-and-now" (Hochschild, 1983; Västfjäll, 2002). Thus, emotions can be integrated into Mead's (1934/1975) view of the self. They are both a part of our interaction with

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[26] This view was put forward by McPhail & Rexroat (1979), but Blumer (1980) strongly counter argued that it was due to an oversimplification of Mead's (1934/1975) work.

others and of the generalized others, which influence the interpretation of the emotion, and also which emotions are preferable and appropriate.

3.2 Identity

3.2.1 Identity as conceptualizing of the self

Mead (1934/1975) called himself a social behaviourist, but the only thing he seems to have in common with behaviourists such as Watson (1920) and Skinner (1953) is that the point of departure must be the observable. While Watson (1920) draws the conclusion that consciousness should be taboo in behavioural science as it is not observable, Mead (1934/1975) finds consciousness most important as social interaction actually builds and precedes consciousness. Consciousness in a broad sense is often described as the aspect that is the foundation of humanity, and what actually separates us from animals. Consciousness is described as being aware of that "I am the person having this experience right now", merely having the experience is not enough. What makes it complicated is that consciousness in itself is an inner, qualitative, subjective experience, which cannot be reduced to an objective "third-person-phenomenon"[27] (Searle, 1999), but we can study the social interaction and the accounts people make when constructing the world.

Mead (1934/1975) sees the shaping of the self mainly as subconscious processes, but introspective management training aims at being more conscious regarding ourselves. Searle (1999) argues that intentionality of consciousness is central to how the mind works. A process of introspection in order to obtain self-knowledge could be described as an intentional attention of the consciousness to oneself, i.e. it aims at making the subconscious process of the self more conscious. Using Mead's (1934/1975) terms self-knowledge could be understood as being aware of the process of "me" performing social control and of how we perceive the generalized others and the interaction between "I" and "me". The generalized others presented in the previous chapter serve as stabilizers of the process, which make it rather slow and predictable. These very stable processes have similarities with different states, although they are processes.

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[27] We can of course study consciousness through a psychobiological perspective, but a description of consciousness reduced to biological and chemical processes lack the opportunity to grasp this inner, qualitative and subjective experience.

The concepts self and identity overlap, but identity could be seen as the *conscious conceptualizing of the self* and thereby introspection and self-knowledge could probably best be understood as an identity process. Albert (1998) emphasises the processual character of the identity, which corresponds to Mead's (1934/1975) processual view of the self. Albert (1998) sees identity as an on-going construction. He argues that identity is based on a question, a reflexive question: Who am I? Identity is the answer to this question. The answer to an identity question is always a narrative; a figure, a sentence or a phrase are never enough to describe an identity (Albert, 1998). Therefore identity is best described through qualitative, interpretative methods and especially the narrative method[28]. Crafoord (1994) agrees with this view of identity as an on-going narrative and he adds that it is a central human need to seek situations where this narrative is enacted (told). The reflexive question "who am I?" might suggest that identity is only an in-going process, which also was the focus of early theorizing of identity. However, later research (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998; Fiol et al, 1998) has to a larger extent brought in symbolic interactionism and thereby clarified that there is an outgoing process as well, since the question "Who am I?" is always answered in relation to a social system of meaning, i.e. "Who do I want to be?". Often we label social systems of meaning culture. Consequently, using this view of identity means that we capture our own struggle to make sense of ourselves in relation to culture.

3.2.2 Identity and alterity

By taking the standpoint of a social constructivist and symbolic interactionist I have already challenged the traditional view of identity (and self) as something that could be found. I have proposed that it is something that is "made", i.e. something that is socially constructed in negotiation with others. An important addition to that is that identity is something you *establish in relation* to the context (Czarniawska 2000; 2002), it is not something you have. To emphasize the relational aspect of identity, Gergen (1991) talks about *relational self*. Previously, in the problem development chapter, it was noticed that being a manager is closely related to the managerial context. Using Gergen's (1991) argument, managerial identity is shaped in close interaction with the managerial context.

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[28] I will develop this further in chapter 4.

However, managerial context is not the only context a manager relates to and more importantly there are several social systems of meaning that the identity question is answered in relation to. We are parts of and meet many different social systems of meaning. Czarniawska (2000; 2002) uses the terms identity and alterity to explain the identity process. The terms are opposites: identity representing what we find similar to us and alterity what we find different from us. The process of establishing identities is an ongoing process of defining who we are alike and who we are not alike. I see it as referring to different social systems of meaning, which either are brought too us as something we relate to (identity), or something we *de*-identify *from* (alterity). Consequently, the social systems we do not relate to ("I am not like that") are just as important as the social systems we relate to in constructing our identities. I argue that identity work constitutes ongoing dialogues of "Who am I?", "Who do I want to be?", "Who am I like?", "Who am I not like?" related to each other.

3.2.3 Identity confusion - multiple identities

We are members of many communities and networks, participants in many discourses, an audience to messages from everybody and everywhere - messages that present conflicting ideals and norms and images of the world (Gergen, 1991), which must mean that we have multiple identities.

Individuals negotiate and re-negotiate personal identity, struggling to make internal peace with the multiple components of their selves and the claims made by the different social systems of meaning to which they are connected (Anderson, 1995b). Post-modern persons are multi-community persons, and their lives as social beings are based on adjusting to shifting contexts and being true to divergent - and occasionally conflicting - commitments.

The problematic thing with multiple identities is that they are traditionally related to mental illness. An example is Erikson's (1968) classical description of identity diffusion as a state of bewilderment at the lack of a firm sense of self. However, the multiple identities refered to here are on the contrary one of the functional patterns necessary to life, they are by no means pathological (Lifton, 1995). Rather the case of multiple identities is the "normal case" and it is doubtful if a person normally develops a coherent sense of identity (Gergen, 1995). The problem is that the ideal person in society is still "the firm character who has self-

integrity" and we think in inconsistent persons as undependable or fakes. The social structure encourages one-dimensionality. We reward consistent identity in others and punish variations (Gergen, 1995). Our general inability to tolerate inconsistencies in others has its explanation as it makes interaction easier, makes it predictable, and greases the wheels of social discourse.

Gergen (1995) points out that it is this - finding ourselves in routines that vary little from day to day, relating to the same others, encountering the same situations - that we should be really afraid of: being too fixed in a specific identity, which might become constricting and rigid over time; not the fact that we might not be consistent. The problem with that is that it would mean the end of "free individualism" as we know it, i.e. the inner-directed "stay-the-course"-personality (Anderson, 1995b), which we tend to celebrate.

3.2.4 Appropriateness to the situation

The previous discussion regarding multiple identities is all good, as long as the different identities are held separate, but what happens when multiple and perhaps contradictory identities are evoked at the same time? And what happens if we in one situation relate to a social system of meaning (identity), and in another situation distance ourselves from the same social system of meaning (alterity)?

Multiple identities, of which some are contradictory, create ambiguity. Ambiguous situations are dealt with following a logic of appropriateness rather than a logic of rationality, according to March (1994). The logic of appropriateness is based upon the idea that the managers are imagined to ask three questions (explicitly or implicitly):
1. The question of *recognition*: What kind of situation is this?
2. The question of *identity*: What kind of person am I?
3. The question of *rules*: What does a person, such as I, do in a situation like this?

The process is not random, arbitrary or trivial, but systematic, reasoning and often complicated. The logic of appropriateness has similarities with the concept reflection-in-action, developed by Schön (1983)[29].

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[29] Schön's (1983, 1987) writing on the reflective practitioner changed the view of professional work. Before his writing, the focus was on the rather standardized and technical problem *solving* of professional work. Schön (1983) showed that the problem *setting*, which was not standardized, was an essential prerequisite to more standardized problem solving.

Reflection-in-action describes the phase of problem setting in professional work, where the practitioner starts a conversation with the situation. Reflection-in-action questions the belief that "either you think or you act" as the practitioners are reflecting while they are acting. Otherwise reflection is normally looked upon as either "stop-and-think", as Arendt (1971) calls it, as a pause in the middle of the action or to reflect *on* the action, i.e. afterwards you look back on it. However, both these latter views correspond to "either you think or you act", not to reflection-in-action. As I suggested in chapter 2.2 reflection-in-action describes managerial work very well. Managers tend to have a preference for action, and reflection is performed while acting.

I use reflection-in-action to understand the first of the questions that March (1994) proposes that managers ask themselves when meeting ambiguity: Recognition – what kind of situation is this? The question describes a problem setting: trying to define a situation. Trying to define a situation is one of the basic aims of communication, so this definition is foremost done through communicating with oneself or others (Engquist, 1994). Schön (1983) emphasized that reflection-in-action was grounded in identity. March (1994) gives an opportunity to elaborate the identity issue of reflection-in-action, as the second and third questions are both related to identity work. The second of the questions - What kind of a person am I? – could be interpreted as: Which identit-*ies* have I established? The third question - What does a person such as I do in a situation like this? – then opens up for dealing with multiple identities, as it implies defining oneself in different situations, i.e. "choosing the appropriate identity for the situation". Consequently, the logic of appropriateness is based upon defining situations, defining oneself in relation to the situation and defining the rules in this identity-situation relation. The process is not sequential, rather the opposite. The questions are related to each other and are defined and re-defined in a complex process, but similarly as with reflection-in-action, it is not a separate state, it is something that is performed while acting.

The logic of appropriateness (March, 1994) has the same foundation as symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969). Mead (1934/1975) describes the communication with the "generalized others" as a form of communication with oneself. The "generalized others" constitute how individuals think others view them, i.e. they look upon themselves through the eyes of significant others, which helps them construct their selves. The questions March (1994) proposes as the basis of the logic of appropriateness constitute a similar form of communication with oneself, but in the communication with oneself is

implicitly a conversation with the situation and others regarding what is appropriate.

March (1994) names the third of the questions as the question of rules, because the answer to the question gives a space for maneuver, restricted by rules. The rules define the boundaries of what is appropriate. We create rules and adopt rules, for example from our organizations and from our profession. Rule-following might sound deterministic, but considering the rich processes by which both identities and rules are created, maintained, interpreted, changed, but also ignored. Rule-following is far from deterministic or static, but it is rather ambiguous and filled with uncertainty.

Not all parts of an individual's identities are available at the same time. Managers do not act like managers in all situations. Aspects of the self that are seen as central are more fully elaborated, while more peripheral aspects of the self are less elaborated, less frequently evoked, and less burdened with requirements of consistency than are more central aspects. The pursuit of appropriateness involves experimentation with new identities, inconsistency and "self-discovery" (March, 1994)

March (1994) mentions the interaction of four psychological mechanisms in noticing the relevance of identities or rules in a situation. Firstly, there is *experiential learning*. Individuals learn to evoke (or not to evoke) an identity in a situation by positive or negative experiences from the past. Identities connected with positive experiences are more likely to be evoked. Secondly there is *categorization*. There are parts of the self that are more central and parts that are more peripheral. Identities that constitute conceptualizations of the more central parts of the self are likely to be evoked more frequently. Thirdly it is *recency*. Identities that have recently been evoked are likely to be evoked again. Finally, there is the *social context of others*. The real or "imagined" (through generalized others) presence of others highlights social definitions of identities.

The logic of appropriateness evokes different identities and different rules to different situations. However, identities are rarely precise; the same identity may evoke inconsistent rules as well. Consequently, there is an ambiguity *between* identities as well as *within* identities. To say that "manager" constitutes one identity would thereby be an over-simplification. Even if I previously claimed that this process is made while acting (reflection-in-action), the connection between the logic of appropriateness and action has so far not been explicitly discussed. The logic of appropriateness influences action, as it means that the manager

defines what actions are appropriate, in relation to identity, rules/roles and situation. Normally, such coordinated behaviour emerged from subjective perceptions and preferences, and "negotiated" with explicit and implicit others are known as *social roles*[30].

A manager's identity processes related to different situations he/she meets during a day evoke different identities and different rules, which make a manager shift roles several times during a day. Zaleznik (1989) argued that organizations need people who are flexible and can take on many roles, and also abandon many roles without being disabled by a sense of loss. I would argue that this argument is even more valid for managers considering their position "in the middle", being both employed and a representative for the employer. These shifts, role transitions, will be the next term to discuss.

3.3 Role transitions

The previous chapter might have given the misleading impression that identities create roles, but I would like to emphasize that there is an ongoing interaction between identities and roles, which means roles also influence identities. For example a role as a manager gives a sense of identity (Watson 1996a). Consequently, it is likely that you are appointed manager (to some extent an imposed role) and you later start to identify with that role. Anderson (1995a) stresses the interactive part of roles and that they are not determined or static: Roles are useful tools for making society work and giving people a sense of identity, but they are reified social behaviour and nothing else. People created them, and sometimes other people need to re-create or discard them.

Role transition is defined as the psychological and physical (if relevant) movement between roles, including disengagement from one role and engagement in another (Ashforth, 2001). Role transitions are divided into micro role transitions and macro role transitions. Micro role transitions mean moving between *simultaneously* held roles, i.e. they are everyday events as leaving work as a manager and coming home as a father. Another word for micro role transitions is *role alternations* (Allen & Van de Vliert, 1984), which perhaps better captures the nature of micro role transitions. Macro role transitions are different as they represent moving between *sequentially* held roles, which means that macro role transitions

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[30] This is a symbolic interactionist perspective of roles. Role theory, based on the structuralist approach, sees roles as fixed from behavioural expectations associated with given positions in the social structure. However, the two perspectives have slowly started to merge (Turner, 1985).

are less frequent and tend to create permanent change as for example a promotion or another career movement.

In describing role transitions there are three attributes of roles that are particularly relevant: Role boundaries, role identities and role sets.

Role boundary refers to whatever delimits the perimeter and thereby the scope of the role (Ashforth, 2001). Boundaries are socially constructed, and are real in the sense that the individual perceives them as real and acts upon them as if they were real (Thomas, 1923/1951). Zerubavel (1991) describes boundaries as mental fences that separate things from others and thereby simplify and order the environment. Boundaries are often related to specific settings or circumstances and thereby transitions, crossing boundaries, often mean moving through *space* (e.g. from home to the office) and/or *time* (e.g. career path).

Role identities are closely connected to situational identities described in the previous chapters. In short, a role identity defines the rules (compare with previous chapter) connected to a certain role, as values, beliefs, interaction styles and time horizons associated to the role. The role identity shows to what extent you define the role as a part of the self. The role's boundaries facilitate the articulation of the role identity, as they define the domain of the role and demark what activities belong to this role and other roles (compare identity/alterity in the previous chapter).

Role sets are related to the social system in which the role is a part. The various roles that are more or less directly linked to a focal role are referred to as the role set. The nature of the interdependence between roles is different, and thereby the interaction between any two roles is more or less unique. Following on from the situational character of identity discussed in the previous chapter, role identities are largely established by its role set. Consequently, any given role is multifaceted in the sense that the individual will adjust the role toward each member of the role set.

3.3.1 Micro role transitions

What makes micro role transitions intriguing is that to switch roles is to potentially switch worlds; and yet most people do it several times a day with hardly a second thought (Ashforth et al., 2000).

Micro role transitions are boundary-crossing activities, but as they are temporary they do not involve unlearning or socialization as within a situation of permanent change, but rather a matter of attention or salience (Ashforth et al., 2000). Still they have aspects of unfreezing/separation, moving/transition, refreezing/incorporation (Lewin, 1951; Van Gennep, (1909/1960), but not as evident as within macro role transitions where these matters will be further elaborated (see figure 3.1 and chapter 3.3.2). Most micro role transitions are routinized and may become more or less programmed in such a way that they unfold with little conscious thought or feeling (Ashforth et al, 2000). The process of unfreezing - moving - refreezing then also becomes rather vague.

The micro role transition process is influenced by the extent of which the two roles involved are *segmented* or *integrated* (Ashforth et al., 2000). Whether roles are segmented or integrated is mainly influenced by the role identities connected to the roles and whether the role boundaries are *flexible* and *permeable*. A role with flexible boundaries is not strongly connected to a certain setting, but can be enacted in various settings and at various times. The permeability of a role is the degree to which the role occupant can physically be located in the role's domain, but psychologically and/or behaviourally in another role. Two roles are segmented if there is a high contrast in the role identities and the role boundaries are inflexible and impermeable. At the other end of the continuum, two roles are integrated if there is a low contrast in the role identities and the role boundaries are flexible and permeable. The cases of two roles being either fully segmented or fully integrated are rare. Rather they show a continuum between two opposite poles. Depending on whether the roles are segmented or integrated there are different challenges in role transitions. If the roles are segmented the challenge lies in crossing the role boundaries, while if they are integrated the challenge lies in creating and maintaining role boundaries as the roles might be blurred.

Role boundaries and identities help structure and differentiate one's roles, and rites of passage (Van Gennep 1909/1960) help each transition.

3.3.2 Macro role transitions

Macro role transitions (Ashforth et al. 2000; Asforth, 2001) represent permanent change, in contrast to the micro role transitions, which are everyday events. Macro role transitions have mainly been investigated in relation to career paths. Over time, career can be understood as an

ongoing negotiation between individual and organization (Barley, 1989)[31] and a sequence of macro role transitions (Trice & Morand, 1989) when we change positions.

Trice & Morand (1989) argue that the anthropological model known as rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1909/1960) is helpful in understanding the phenomenon. Rites of passage describes well-established ceremonial events that manage role transitions within a social system. Transitions are then described in three different phases: separation, transition and incorporation. The essence of the argument is similar to Lewin's (1951) field theory, which has been widely recognized as it captures elements common to most change processes. Lewin's (1951) model has been used to model psychological processes involved in influences individual beliefs, attitudes and values. He used water as a metaphor and named the phases unfreezing, changing and refreezing. Trice & Morand (1989) argue that even if the phases are comparable the two models diverge. Lewin (1951) has a psychological point of departure, while Van Gennep (1909/1960) has a more sociological point of departure. Where Lewin (1951) focuses on individual beliefs, attitudes and values, Van Gennep (1909/1960) focuses on ceremonial events that are well-established and thereby an important part of society. A rite of passage has signalizing effects as it signifies to the wider social group that a role transformation has occurred. Significant others are enlisted as the supporting cast in the social drama (Trice & Morand, 1989).

In figure 3.1 the two models, rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1909/1960) and Lewin's (1951) field theory, are combined to understand macro role transitions[32].

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[31] Barley (1989) suggests that the Chicago School of Sociology (Mead, 1934/1975) is indirectly the basis of the recent views on career as it offers an understanding of person-role interaction over time. The view that individuals both construct society and are socialized into society in a life-history perspective has much to offer to career theory. The career path is thereby described as an ongoing negotiation between individual and organization.

[32] Neither Lewin (1951) nor Van Gennep (1909/1960) could be seen as interactionists. Lewin (1951) is seen as the precursor to the cognitive social psychology, which is more static and deterministic than the interactionist perspective. However, his model of role transitions is so general that I argue that it is the *use* of the model that decides whether it is interactionist or not; not the founder. In fact, Cooke (1999) argues that the reason why Lewin (1951) and Schein (1978) are used so frequently in management research is because of what they *left out*, which make them applicable to most perspectives. Van Gennep's (1909/1960) rites of passage is a sociological model, and could also be used as an interactionist model, with the notion that it focuses on the social systems of meaning rather than direct interactions with others.

Figure 3.1 Macro role transitions

INDIVIDUAL

UNFREEZING   MOVING   REFREEZING

SEPARATION   TRANSITION   INCORPORATION

SOCIAL SYSTEM OF MEANING
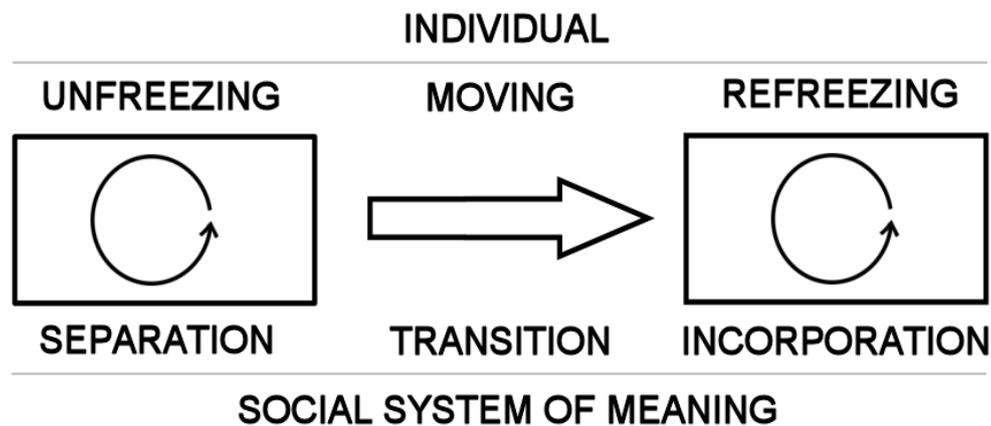
Source: Idea from Lewin (1951) and Van Gennep (1909/1960)

Lewin's (1951) model focuses on these individual experiences of the unfreezing phase. However, Ashforth (1998) emphasizes that rather than changing states (from ice to water as Lewin (1951) implies) the unfreezing phase may simply mean that individuals develop their self-definitions along existing or new paths. Van Gennep's (1909/1960) rites of passage focuses on the rituals connected to different stages. The symbolic character of ritual offers an enhancement of cognitive and especially emotional experiences (Jenkins, 1996), which may facilitate a process of transition as it facilitates the different phases of unfreezing - moving – refreezing, especially since a ritual shows the transition to other people.

Even if it is presented as a stage model, the intention is not to neglect the processual character. The three stages do not represent three stable states, but three different processes, which probably is not as orderly or divided as implied in the figure. Rather they are parallel and hard to separate from each other. The negotiation process emphasized in the interactionist perspective, in shaping of self supports and/or hindering the different processes, will thereby influence whether a transformation takes place or not, and in what way.

Unfreezing/separation is the first stage in the process of macro role transition. Borrowing Lewin's (1951) terminology, the individual must "unfreeze" and thereby foster receptiveness to change. In this stage, a "letting go", "moving away" and separation from current statuses or roles occurs. Schein (1978) emphasizes that this means unlearning current behaviour. Consequently, the unfreezing/separation phase requires *de*identification with a social object (Ashforth, 1998), i.e. a process where

the individual questions taken-for-granted assumptions and selectively denies aspects of the social object. The exit of the psychological role therefore starts long before the actual exit of the physical role (Ashforth, 2000). The "letting go" phase might create a sensation of losing meaning and stability, and thereby be emotional and hard with much anxiety for the individual.

The next phase, moving/transition, constitutes the moving to the "new role" according to Lewin (1951), and a period of transition or liminality, i.e. an "in-between" state, according to Van Gennep (1909/1960). Trice & Morand (1989) argue that this state of not being in the old role and still not in the new one constitutes an unstructured and ambiguous state. Ashforth (1998) notes that this process often begins with anticipatory identification with the new role (e.g. an MBA student may begin reading the Wall Street Journal) and making minor, localized or tentative claims to the new role, i.e. a low-risk means of "testing" the new role. If these small attempts meet support it will facilitate the major transition, while if they are rebuffed the individual can retreat without losing his or her self-esteem. Weick (1984) argues that these "small wins" are essential for continuing towards the aspired role. They can even create "a snowball effect", which speeds up the process (Ashforth et al., 2000). Rites and ceremonies (van Gennep, 1909/1960) institutionalise changes, which may take place both within and between social domains. The importance of context makes changes *between* social domains generally easier, while changes *within* a social dimension require strong articulation of the new role, i.e. rites and ceremonies become more important.

The last phase, refreezing/incorporation, means that the individual has become comfortable and confident in his/her role and consider it as reflecting his- or herself. However, a personal validation of the new role is not enough for a successful refreezing/incorporation according to Ashforth (1998). There must be a social validity as well, i.e. the "social audience" must accept and support the role.

3.4 Personal and organizational needs - reciprocity at work

The quotation in the introduction - *Being yourself and being manager can be complicated* (Watson & Harris, 1999: 155) – captures the difficulties for an individual manager to deal with the requirements from the organization in relation to what he or she wants as a person.

Being appointed manager means that there is a formal contract between the individual and the organization, but also an implicit contract (Watson, 1996a) as described in chapter two. Introspective management training focuses on personal development and not on organizational development. The assumption is that personal development automatically leads to organizational development. However, the person and the organization have different needs and I argue that the relation is hardly as simple as if the person gains the organization gains too. Managers have relations to their organizations but, as both managers and organizations are in processes of becoming, these relations will change over time. In fact the relations are processes as well. Career is one example of a manifestation of individual/organization relation, but the focus of this chapter will not be manifestations in themselves. Instead I will discuss the possibility of seeing individual and organizational needs as the origin of the ongoing negotiation that careers constitute.

Management training could either take its point of departure in personal development or in organizational development. If management training in general focuses on managerial tools (management seen as based on technical skills) (Björkegren, 1986; Whetten & Cameron, 1991), introspective management training takes the opposite point of departure – the manager as a human being. The former uses organizational development as its starting-point, where the managers are provided with different tools to help the organization to fulfil its goals. The latter takes personal development as its point of departure, where the implicit assumption is that the organization gains from the manager's personal development.

Management training could be viewed as derived from organizational needs or personal needs as in figure 3.2. From the individual perspective there is a potential match between the level of individual commitment to the job and the level of organizational job demands (Arthur & Kram, 1989). Using Csikszentmihalyi's (1975, 1990, 1997) research on the psychology of the optimal experience, Bailyn (1984) and Arthur & Kram (1989) have developed ideas of how the ongoing negotiation between individual and organization results in experienced matches or mismatches between the parties over time.

Figure 3.2 Individual perspective on individual/organizational interaction
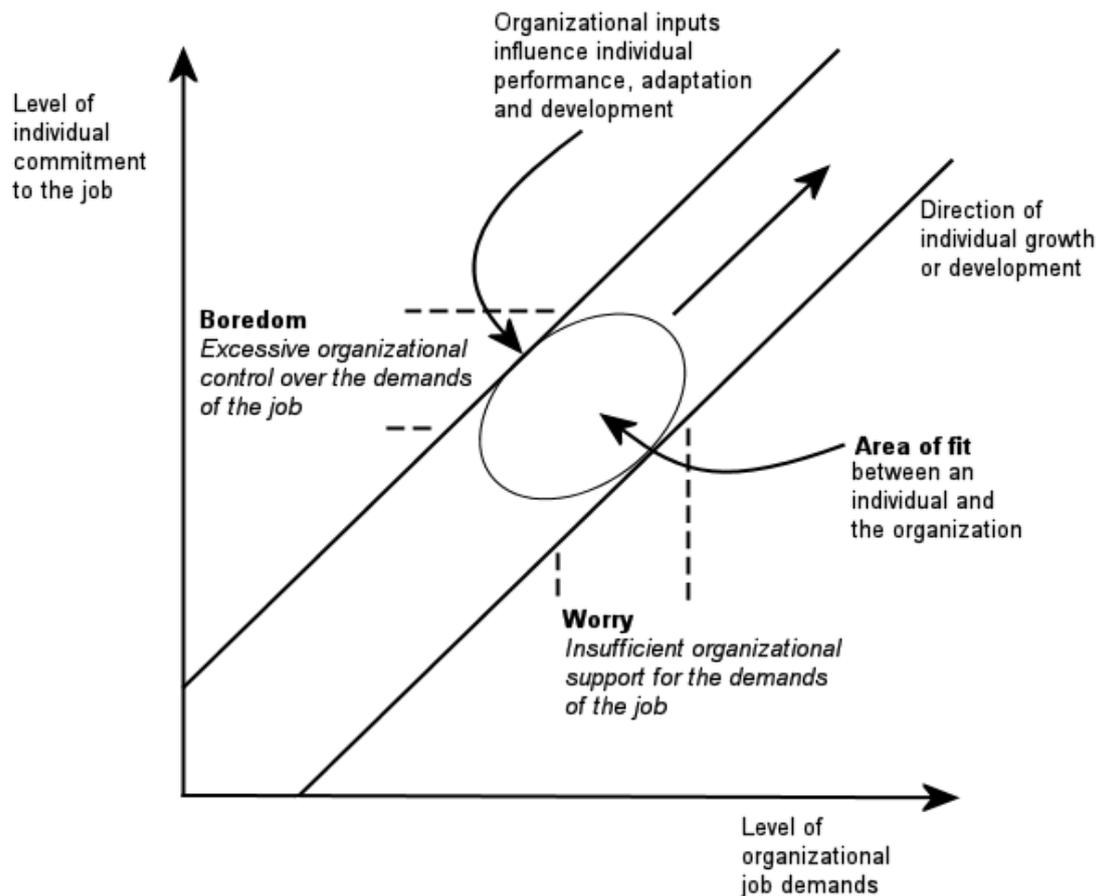
Source: Arthur & Kram, 1989, p. 299

I will use this model, but with an important addition to make it fit the interactionist perspective. When I talk about the level of organizational demands, it is not demands in an objective sense. It is demands as *perceived* by the individual. Consequently, the important aspect is not whether the demands are too high or too low, it is how they are *perceived* that creates individual experiences.

When the individual perceives sufficient support of organizational inputs, personal performance, adaptation and development will be affected in a positive way. However, there are two potential situations of mismatch where the individual's needs are not met. If the level of commitment is higher than the perceived job challenge, the person will probably experience boredom. Conversely, a person will worry if he/she experiences that the job requires more than he or she can give to the work situation.

Figure 3.2 shows the relation individual - organization from the perspective of the individual, but as Watson (1996b) points out there is a two-way constructive process taking place between the individual and

his/her organization. Figure 3.3 shows the relation individual - organization from the perspective of the organization.

Fig. 3.3 Organizational perspective on individual/organization interaction
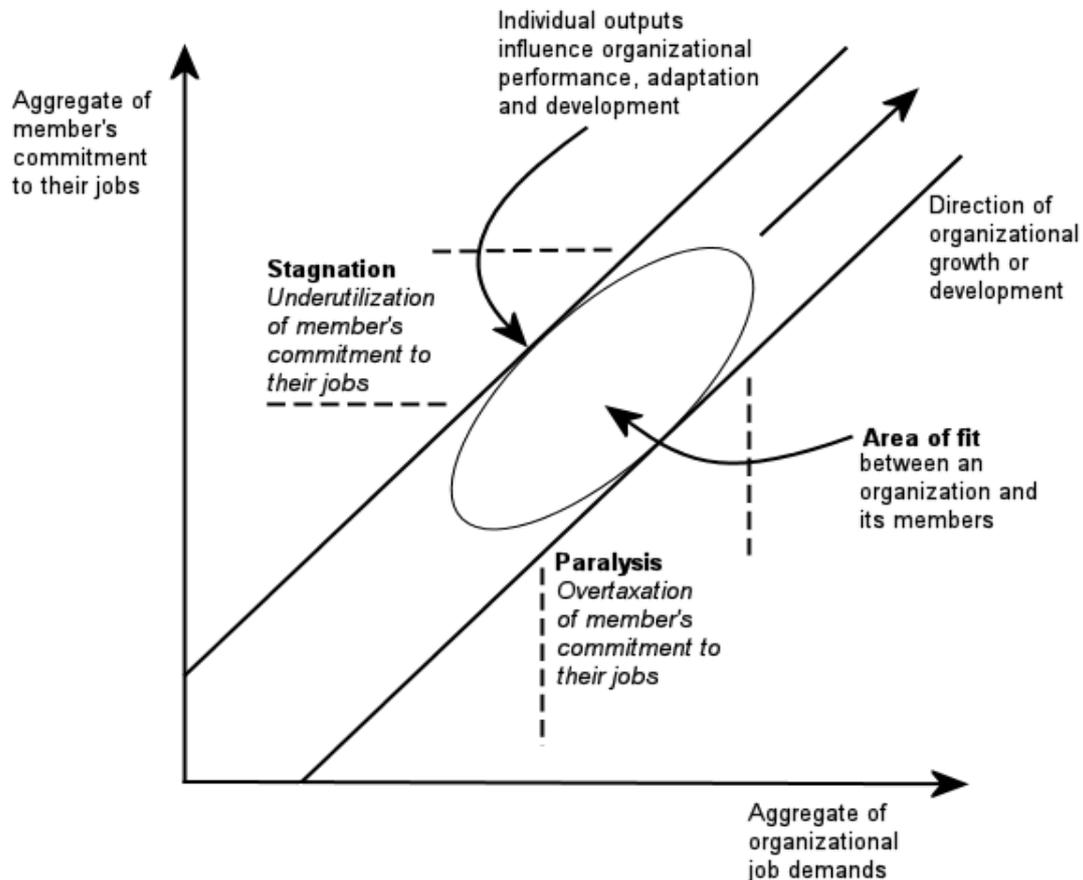
Source: Arthur & Kram, 1989, p. 301

From the organizational perspective there is a potential match between the aggregate of the members' commitment to their jobs and the aggregate of organizational job demands. When there is a fit the individual outputs will influence organizational performance, adaptation and development positively. There are two potential mismatches from this perspective as well. If job arrangements provide insufficient opportunity for the members to respond to organizational needs, the result will be organizational stagnation. And if job arrangements make excessive demands on the members, the effect will be organizational paralysis.

The two perspectives presented in figure 3.2 and 3.3 respectively emphasize two different developmental tasks. From an individual perspective it is about personal development and from an organizational perspective it is about development of work situations. Introspective management training focuses on personal development, while developing

the work situation is left to the organization to take care of. Consequently, the individual perspective and figure 3.2 will be the point of departure in the analysis, but the organizational perspective could be used to understand a possible reciprocity between the parties.

Arthur & Kram (1989) argue that in organizations in general there is a lack of reciprocity between possibilities for personal development and organizational development. Reciprocity means that figure 3.2 and 3.3 meet, i.e. there is an organizational understanding of how individuals perceive their situations and understand organizational requirements. If the processes described in figure 3.2 and 3.3 are separate there would still be a form of ongoing negotiation between the individual and the organization, but it would be implicit and without any direct or real interaction. Reciprocity requires direct and real interaction.

3.5 Managers' identity work and struggle to fit

Even if the negotiation between individual and organization is the most evident relation involving a struggle to fit, it is not the only one. To be a manager implies an ongoing question of fitting into many different contexts, cultures and discourses. There is a continuing process of negotiation, not only between the individual and the world, but also between different identity constructions. Manager is only one of these identity constructions, which supports and/or competes with for example constructions of gender, professional worker and family (Simon, 1995).

These notions are valid for any person, but should be even more evident for managers. They work with words (Jönsson, 2001) and to a large extent their daily work is about relating to people who are members of different discourses. Therefore being a manager means to travel between different social orders, establishing different identities and making frequent role transitions.

Multiple realities and multiple approaches to reality are stressful. O'Hara and Anderson (1995) claim that a lot of people who seek psychotherapy today are looking for some certainty and guidelines because they are confused by the staggering variety of beliefs from which they may choose. To some extent we long for one-dimensionality and thereby certainty.

I argue that introspective management training to some extent is a response to the longing for one-dimensionality. Despite the training's

rhetoric of developing personal leadership and the training's criticism of universal tools, the existential psychology the training is based upon implicitly represents one-dimensionality of person and a universal solution – conscious presence. The argument is that if you find who you are (the one and true self) you will be less confused since you will act according to the wish of your inner self.

Introspective management training means that two different discourses meet, but it is not self-evident that they merge or are easily integrated. Personal development discourse, of which introspection is a part, makes a division between personal identity and social identity that is emotive, i.e. personal identity is "truer" than social identity. However, being a manager is mainly about social identity. These discourses are evidently contradictory, which might create different problems for the managers when integrating the program in their daily managerial lives.

Introspective management training is mainly manifested in a more visible and evident identity process. Introspective management training means *identity work*, i.e. a more conscious conceptualizing of the self. However, the identity work will also reveal that the managers have established many different identities and that some of them are already in conflict. The introspective management training rather serves as a provider of one more identity, i.e. yet another identity is added to the already multiple identities. The question of which identity is evoked in different situations is to a large extent related to the logic of appropriateness, i.e. a situational process of reflection. The reflection concerns defining the situation, defining oneself and through the relation of these two defining what rules (and roles) are appropriate in the situation. The logic of appropriateness leads to an endless amount of role transitions. The role (and identity) that the introspective management training provides is only one among others. Role transitions exist on two different levels. Micro role transitions are everyday events, i.e. role transitions that can be handled within the social system of meaning or between different social systems of meaning. Macro role transitions on the other hand are rare and involve to permanently leaving a role. Micro role transitions are in other words small, daily adjustments to fit, but when the fit is no longer possible macro role transitions can be the way to new roles and a new situation of fit.

The true and stable self represented by introspective management training is thereby challenged, but on the other hand the opposite - a totally fluid self without any stability – is doubtful as well. If the self was fluid there would not be as strong emotions connected to macro role transitions, as

our lives would consist of only micro role transitions. The interactionistic view offers a middle course. The interactionistic view of the self has situational and relational aspects as it is shaped and negotiated in different situations and in different relations under the logic of appropriateness. Identity work would therefore be a process of balancing.

4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When we talk about method, I believe we talk about what researchers do that connects theory and practice, where theory is seen as a language to describe the empirical material from practice in a generalized way. Method then becomes what researchers really do, but despite this fact method is often handled as if it was object not action. This is probably misleading, as it tends to draw the attention to labelling the method instead of expressing what actually has been done. I find it more important to describe why and how I have done things, and what the consequences of these choices might have been, than to label it.

Choices of method are very much a question of fitting into institutional practices (Czarniawska, 1998). It is a challenge for a researcher to try to get his/her own view based on individual experimentation to fit into the accessible (or inevitable) institutional practices. However, I do not believe that this by default is something negative. In the best cases I believe that a merge between individual experimentation and institutional practices can take place, creating synergy effects, but there is of course also a risk that institutional practices devour individual experimentation. When you experiment you have to reflect on what you do. When you only accept an institutional practice, you might not reflect upon your own choices. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000) stress the importance of a reflective approach to science and I would like to stress it even more by arguing that it is the most important methodological consideration. In our daily life, we hardly question our taken-for-granted assumptions, but as researchers I think we are obliged to do that. It is a part of our job.

As a researcher you have your tools to collect data from the empirical world, and these tools could be seen as different techniques that you learn to handle (Czarniawska, 1998). I used the word experimentation earlier, but perhaps the word improvisation describes the process better, because to be able to improvise you have to know your techniques well at the beginning (Kao, 1996).

Some labelling is inevitable in this chapter. However, I do not wish to hide behind the label, but to be able to describe my reflections and techniques.

4.1 Management as social construction

Management as a subject was rather late to follow "the linguistic turn", in comparison with anthropology, sociology, social psychology and other disciplines that took the turn already in the 1970s and 1980s. Management has for long been captured in the logico-scientific mode that has dominated all science, thus following the lead of natural sciences. The ground for "the linguistic turn" is the emphasis on language as the instrument of reality construction (Czarniawska, 1999b).

To see the world as socially constructed does not mean that there is no "real world out there", it surely is, but it does not become "real" to us until it is socially constructed in our minds. The important thing is that even if I believe that the world is out there, I do not believe that the truth is out there (Rorty, 1989). Truth is a human creation; truth is a social construction.

The problematic thing with "reaching" a social construction is that people tend to be unaware of the fact that it is created. Something people routinely do after they have created a ritual, a belief, a myth, a social role or a law is that they forget they created it, and live in a world they never knew they made (Berger & Luckman, 1966).

Narrative knowing is based upon the view of the world as socially constructed. Bruner (1986) contrasted narrative knowing to traditional scientific knowledge based on formal logic and argued that the narrative is the main form of human knowing. Scientific knowledge with reasoning based on a formal logic, with a high level of abstraction and exclusively causal links, is hardly a good description of human knowledge (Czarniawska, 1999b), rather the opposite. The narrative mode of knowing consists of organizing one's experience around the intentionality of human action. This is mainly done independently of formal logic, with a low level of abstraction and with causal links established in an arbitrary way.

Czarniawska (1999b) claims that the narrative form of knowing is very close to the tradition of empirical research known as fieldwork. The result of this kind of research tends to have similarities to people's non-scientific explanations and interpretations of real-life events. Resistance from the academic world could therefore be understood by using Lyotard's (1987) statement that the legitimacy of scientific knowledge in its modern and Western meaning depends on its sharp differentiation

from common-sense, which is the everyday knowledge of "ordinary", non-academic people.

My study is mainly guided by and thereby heavily influenced by narration, but that does not mean that I have no scientific claims. Writing a doctoral thesis in a traditional style could of course be viewed as fitting into institutional practices and I do not in any way deny that I consider what I am doing as science.

In the beginning of my research process, I was sure that my interest was in a certain phenomenon and its influences – introspective management training and its influences on managers. However, during the process it became clear to me that the phenomenon I focused on was not that easy to define, nor did my attempts to create a well-defined picture of it help me to gain an understanding of it.

When I tried to tell my story with the material I had, I had to widen the scope of the study to create an understanding of it. I had to bring in the context to a greater extent. By narrowing the phenomenon as I had initially done only limited my ability to understand it. What I had experienced Czarniawska (1998) describes by stating that both the phenomenon and the context are socially constructed. If we want to make them sharply differentiated, we can always see to it, but it hardly helps our understanding. The boundaries between phenomenon and the context are always blurred.

This is often the case with complex social phenomena. Alvesson (2002, 2003) claims that the insight that social phenomena are complex seldom guides research in social sciences, which he has exemplified with phenomena such as leadership (Alvesson & Svenningson, 2003) and organizational culture (Alvesson, 2002). He argues that as a result of technical cognitive interests, complex social phenomena are often separated into variables in an attempt to seek correlations and causal relations, which can create misleading arguments. One way to deal with this is to avoid vague statements about the phenomena and instead look at specific manifestations and study their consequences. I believe these insights are applicable to any complex social phenomenon, the phenomenon in this study is no exception.

I have tried to avoid general statements and definitions. Instead I have tried to come close to the phenomenon to obtain a massive, thick description (Geertz, 1973), where many variables interact. The aim has been to reach deeply rooted attitudes and beliefs, but also to show the

complexity of a situation and illustrate it from different perspectives. Norén (1995) states that an advantage with using a qualitative, interpretative method is that it makes it possible to "get close" to the actors and let them speak. He also stresses the importance of having "living" data and letting the data speak. Closeness to the actors makes it possible to have the richness of data and qualities that is favourable in interpretative research. The question is not to describe the objective reality that is out there waiting to be described, but to provide a rich description of it and unique insights. This is what determines the level of contribution of the study. Through this rich description, a case study has the ability to describe the background of a certain situation and improve the reader's ability to understand the studied phenomenon and widen his/her intellectual and emotional horizons.

4.2 The theory of practice and the practice of theory

When it comes to the connection between theory and practice I have a practice of theory, i.e. how I use theory, but there are also theories of practice that I have to understand. Let us begin with the former.

Eneroth (1987) argues that the terms deduction and induction define the researcher's use of theories connected to practice (or the general connected to the specific). However, even if we define a deductive approach as research that is derived from concept formation or a number of logical assumptions, and inductive approach as something that is derived from empirical case studies, there is no clear distinction between the two. As I see it, qualitative interpretative studies gain from an interaction between the theoretical framework and the empirical data. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000) call this combination of deductive and inductive approach abductive approach and argue that this is the approach that characterises most qualitative research[33]. My point of departure is the specific (the empirical phenomenon) rather than the general (theories, models, concepts). The inductive approach is claimed to be important in an early stage of developing a research domain, when there are no or few theories and models to explain the field, but I would like to add that it is also important when we deal with complex social phenomena. During my research process, the empirical domain of application and the theoretical framework have gradually been refined through the interaction between them. I have described an empirical

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[33] Actually, Czarniawska (1999b) claims that the original work behind the grounded theory by Glaser & Strauss (1967) advocates a fieldwork practice that sounds more like an abductive approach than an inductive approach, despite the fact that grounded theory today is seen as a clearly inductive approach.

phenomenon, introspective management training and its influences on managers, and have used a theoretical framework to understand it. The theoretical framework has enabled me to go deeper into the empirical world. I have collected more empirical data, which have further refined the framework, and have made it a better tool for the next empirical round. Consequently, my analysis began after the first interview and the analysis has consisted of an on-going interaction between the empirical data and the theoretical framework.

As an academic I am used to expressing my theories explicitly, but I am not the only one that has theories. The practitioners that I am following also have theories, i.e. generalized assumptions about how the world functions, which influence their actions. The difference is that the practitioners' theories in use (Argryris & Schön, 1974) are not as explicit. In fact they might not even be aware of them. Czarniawska (1999b) claims that when it comes to practice, people are seldom conscious of the action theories they are applying. And they do not have to, to do a good job.

I have used chapter 5 of the thesis to express the organizer's view of the program in an attempt to understand their espoused theories. Chapter 6 is then an attempt to describe the theories in use, as it presents the managers' experiences from the training. The management training is not based on an explicit theory, in an academic sense it could be seen as atheoretical. However, by atheoretical I mean that the theories are not explicit, it is most evident that the program is heavily guided by their theories in use. I try to make them explicit and visible. By doing so I also make it possible (or at least easier) to contrast their theories with my theories where there may be differences.

4.3 Entering the field

In approaching the field, the ambition to create narrative knowledge makes the task different in comparison with the ambition to create (logico-) scientific knowledge, according to Czarniawska (1999b). Instead of telling the practitioners what to do and where to go, my aim is to tell them a good story, i.e. a story where the events are its facts and the point is its theory. A story without a point is meaningless (an example would be a field report without structure or theoretical insights). A point without a story belongs to another paradigm, the logico-scientific one.

I am studying the phenomenon of introspective management training and how it might influence participating managers. As my aim is to reach a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, the important criterion of selection was rather to represent as many different qualities as possible, than to create a representative selection.

I contacted the organizers of a program in introspective management training called "Existential Leadership"[34], which I considered matched the type of management training I wanted to study the influences of, i.e. an example of personal development entering the management field. Through the organizers I was able to contact the ten participants that should participate in the program that year and six participants located at three different organizations accepted to be a part of my study. The drawback of the fact that not all ten participants wished to be a part of my study was that I was not allowed access to the courses, but as my main interest was not the training in itself but the managers' experiences of it I found that the disadvantages were limited. In order to understand the rhetoric and pedagogy of the courses I interviewed the leadership trainers and I was also able to participate in a short variant of the program myself.

4.4 Being in the field – data collection

I have used mainly interviews, but also observations in my fieldwork and data collection. Analysis of texts and documents has to some extent been used to provide information about the empirical setting.

A total of 59 interviews and 11 observations have been performed during a period of 18 months. The data collection started when the management training started and was most extensive during the 8 months of training. Follow-up interviews have been made up to almost a year after the completion of the training. The interviews have been mainly with the six participating managers, but also with their managers, peers and subordinates to create a richer picture of their process. The three leadership trainers have been interviewed about the training in itself, and also about the participants' progress during the training. Furthermore, three participants from earlier years were interviewed as a complement to better understand long-term influences.

All techniques for collecting data have their own strengths and weaknesses. By combining techniques the weaknesses of one could to

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[34] My translation from Swedish "Existentiellt ledarskap"

some extent be compensated by the strengths of another technique. A combination of different techniques and methods is often referred to as triangulation.

4.4.1 Interviews

The major strength of interviews as a data collecting technique is that it enables a better understanding of the perspective and meaning of the interviewee (Merriam, 1998). The weakness, on the other hand, is that you only learn about what people *want* to tell you, but at the same time you always get more from the interview than the interviewee is aware of (Czarniawska, 1999a). A possible weakness is that interviews have also been a common event, especially among people high up in the organizational hierarchy, which has made people good at expressing what they want and interpreting the situation. I have found that this often manifests itself by people wanting to talk in general terms rather than about specific events, which rather shows their espoused theories (Argyris & Schön, 1974) than the facts. As an interviewer I have found that asking for examples of the interviewees' statements is a good way of getting them away from "talking theory".

A distinction is often made between structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. I have used a mix of semi-structured and unstructured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, the questions are prepared, but the interviewees choose how they answer themselves, there are no prepared alternatives that they can choose between. Unstructured interviews could be seen as narratives where the interviewer provides the first question, and then lets the interviewee speak freely, only with supporting questions (Kvale, 1996). I used unstructured interviews in a way that is fairly similar to an area of humanistic psychotherapy, developed by Rogers (1961). By this I do not claim to be a therapist, but I found the technique very useful in getting people to talk, but above all to keep them talking and continue to talk about a subject. The technique is rather simple to explain, but not that easy to perform. The basic rule to influence people to "go deeper" in a subject is to repeat or paraphrase what they have just said. I think the interviewee unconsciously experiences this as an *invitation* to move on. As an interviewer I have declared my interest for what they are saying, but I am not forcing them to go on, I invite them.

I used a tape-recorder during the interviews so that I would not have to take notes. I could thereby take part in the conversation in a more natural way, without having to interrupt the conversation with taking notes.

Furthermore, I minimized the risk of missing any important information and was also more able to observe the interviewee. I let the tape-recorder lay on the table between us, and as I understood it, the respondent forgot about the tape-recorder after a while.

The interviews were transcribed and the empirical parts of this thesis are based on these transcriptions. I do not have the illusion that the interviews are a window to another world. In an interview I learn what people want to tell me, but indirectly I get a view of how they construct their world, whether this view is given intentionally or not. There are always things that the interviewee either does not want to tell or is not aware of. That is why I combined interviews with the participants with observations as well as interviews with people working together with them.

4.4.2 Observation

The major strengths of the observation technique is that it makes it possible to follow a process when it happens (Silverman, 1993) and that it shows discrepancies between what people say they do (in interviews for example) and what they actually do (Jönsson, 1996). An observation always means that the researcher influences the situation to some extent. This is impossible to avoid, as the observer is the research instrument. There is no such thing as "a fly on the wall" as some literature in methodology suggests. However, I do not consider it a problem. It becomes a problem only if we have positivistic knowledge claims.

Still, there are reasons to minimize my influence on the situation, mainly for ethical reasons and for the respect for the people working in the field I am studying. To minimize the influence on the situation, Silverman (1993) suggests that it is important to pretend to write all the time so that the people that are being observed do not react and change their actions as a reaction to that you have observed something interesting. He also recommends entering the field without categories settled beforehand as it might prevent you from seeing what is really going on. I have tried to let these recommendations guide me when entering different field situations.

The main advantage that I have found with an observation is that it gives concrete situations to talk about in coming interviews. As I mentioned previously, one of the biggest challenges with interviews is otherwise to get the interviewees to keep to their own experiences and to prevent them from talking theories and beliefs.

4.5 Writing it down

A doctoral thesis is problematic as it for me is a process that has lasted (too?) many years, but for most outsiders it is a product, which you have in your hands right now. This product constitutes my understanding of my subject right now, but it might give a limited picture of my own sensemaking process during these years. Weick (1995) separates interpretation from sensemaking in a similar way. The key distinction is that sensemaking is about the way people generate what they interpret. Thus, sensemaking is about an activity or a process, whereas interpretation can be a process but is just as likely to describe a product. My sensemaking process has resulted in this product, a thesis that constitutes my main interpretation right now, but my sensemaking process will continue.

Weick's (1979; 1995) basic description of the sensemaking process "how can I know what I think until I hear what I say?" is very useful in understanding the role of writing in a research project if you exchange say with write. For those who think that a thesis project is an orderly process with different phases of thinking, collecting empirical data and then writing it down, I must state a different opinion. My thesis project generated a substantial amount of text, which you cannot see in this final text. Still, these texts have been invaluable in my own sensemaking process, regardless of whether it has been about writing interview transcriptions, empirical stories/sequences or theoretical parts.

The most difficult part is for me to understand that you as a reader have not been a part of my sensemaking process. The presentation of the text is therefore essential. I strongly agree with van Maanen (1988), who thinks that the most time consuming part of field work is not in the field, but in the office, writing the text.

4.6 Can you believe this?

Eneroth (1987) argues that, in contrast to a quantitative approach to research, there are no big problems with reliability, validity, precision or representative samples when using a qualitative, interpretative approach. On the contrary, low reliability is desirable since the aim is to describe different kinds of qualities. It is more accurate to talk about depth of understanding rather than mathematical exactness, when describing the precision of the data obtained in a qualitative investigation.

In qualitative, interpretative studies the reliability to a large extent is determined by my performance at the basic level of the research, i.e. it is more influenced by the execution of the interviews and observations (Kunda, 1992) than an elegantly written chapter on the theory and philosophy of science. Therefore, I refer to the earlier sections of this chapter on data collection, as I find them important in order to understand the reliability of my study.

As for the qualitative, interpretative approach and the validity problem, it mainly concerns whether the data supports the conclusions of the analysis or not. Eneroth (1987) states that validity is inherent in the qualitative approach, since the conclusions are based on the collected material. As an adherent of the qualitative approach I do not believe in a final knowledge or absolute truths. On the contrary, I accept that my investigation is part of a larger ongoing process - a development of knowledge. The validity of my conclusions will always be reassessed when new data is obtained or new perspectives are taken.

4.7 Confession time

I went into this project with the belief that I had found the optimal development for managers. I had been very critical of the strong rhetoric of managerialism during my whole research education, and I thought I had found its opposite pole in the humanistic and tempting view of developing management through developing managers' self-knowledge.

When I presented my research proposal before starting my fieldwork, my opponent said: "*You are in love with this concept of self-knowledge. Your feelings will mature and then you will get a more reasonable approach to it, which will make your study and your writing better.*" I did not believe him then, but now I must shamefully admit that I was totally swept away by the tempting and humanistic rhetoric of introspective management training. Reflecting upon it now I find that in many ways the rhetoric was built up in a similar way to managerialistic rhetoric, which I had criticized so intensively. I had criticized one universal solution only to replace it with another universal solution. So… my search for the magic tool was in vain in the sense that I did not find it, but a thesis as a by-product of this quest might be good enough.

5. THE RHETORIC AND LOGIC OF THE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

5.1 Existential Leadership – aim of the training

Existential Leadership is a program organized by the Swedish company Sky Institute. The aim of the program is to create "*conscious and mature leaders by focusing on the fact that leadership is a profession that means leading people*", which in their words means that they "*transform managers to leaders*". This is accomplished by focusing on the leader's existential understanding of him- or herself, i.e. getting to know and understand who you are and understand your existence and how you relate to others.

> *Our vision is to integrate the inner and outer world. Jivan* [leadership trainer] *and I founded this program on this understanding and experience. We have different backgrounds. I come from the business community and I discovered personal development more recently. Personal development was a fantastic thing for me, but I wondered why nobody talked about integrating this into the business world. I started to discuss this with Jivan, who had a background in personal development and therapy, and we decided to try to create a program that integrated these two worlds.* (Stefan, leadership trainer and manager)

> *Our aim is to give them maximal effect in their leadership. We are not here to change people; we are here to help them to get to know who they already are and enhance their inherent talents.* (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

5.2 Structure and content

The program consists of five courses of one week each located at a country house with beautiful surroundings. These courses are spread out over a period of eight months and between every course there are two opportunities for individual coaching for each participant with one of the leadership trainers.

Fifteen main subjects, or frames as the leadership trainers prefer to call them, are handled during the program:

- Conscious presence: The idea that pervades the program is conscious presence, i.e. to be with what is – as it is.
- Meditation: Increases the ability to be consciously present.
- Integrity: Is often the result of deep self-knowledge. It means to be true to yourself and anchored within.
- Energy: To examine yourself from an energy perspective. What makes you gain energy and what makes you lose energy? Energy in balance creates health.
- Responsibility: To examine your attitudes to being responsible for yourself, your subordinates and your work and how you can find balance between them.
- Vision: To create a personal vision that can guide you in your daily life.
- Driving force: To be aware of the driving forces of your behaviour.
- Stress & Relaxation: To understand and prevent stress.
- Power: To examine your attitude to power – yours and others.
- Intuition & heart: To dare to go beyond your intellect and listen deep within. To trust and dare to follow your intuition.
- Creativity: To examine your source of creativity and how your creative process works.
- Coaching: To learn coaching as a leadership style, an attitude that enables you to support your subordinates in finding their creativity and motivation.
- Feminine & Masculine: To understand both our feminine and our masculine sides.
- Relations & meetings: What happens when you relate to others? How could you create meetings that are stimulating and inspiring?
- Decisions: To understand your decision-making process.
- Organization & organism: To understand the difference between a static organization and a living organism. What is required of an organization that allows people to grow and find their unique potential?

You can see our program as a smorgasbord of fifteen subjects. They make up the framework and we explore how you function as a person and as a leader within each category. They are all means of getting to know yourself. If you want to label our work you could say that we are involved in self-knowledge. We have found that the best way to practise successful leadership is to start with yourself. The more you know about yourself, the more you can take responsibility for your actions in every moment; at work mainly, but in your private life as well. (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

The different themes in the program are used to trigger reactions and feelings that might make the participants learn something about themselves. The reason for using so many themes is that different themes trigger reactions in different people, according to the leadership trainers, but they argue that is not the themes themselves that are important, it is what could be achieved through them.

> *The connecting thought is presence, conscious presence. The themes are only etiquettes or doors that lead within. The participants understand that, but some do it quickly and some need more time. If you are too focused on "learning" about every theme, then it tends to take long. We are here to investigate, we don't have the answers beforehand and we will not teach any "right way".* (Stefan, leadership trainer and manager)

The program does not only concern these fifteen themes. In between there is also time for reflection and meditation. This is considered to be a very important part of the program. Meditation is a way to focus within and lower the pace, which enables a lot of reflection on yourself and your current situation.

An important aspect of letting the program last more than 8 months is that the participants are encouraged to practice what they have learned in their daily environment during the weeks between the course weeks. This also gives them an opportunity to reflect upon new situations or hinders during the coming course week. To support the process between the course weeks there are two opportunities for coaching for each participant with one of the leadership trainers, i.e. in total eight coaching opportunities between the courses during the program.

> *Coaching is an important part of what we consider successful leadership. Coaching is a technique based on conscious presence, which you could use in any kind of relation. As leadership very much concerns relating to other people, we encourage the participants to experiment with this technique to be able to use it in their work as leaders. But it is also the technique we use during the courses and during the personal coaching between the courses. During the personal coaching, anything that is on the participant's mind could be discussed. It is totally up to them to take this opportunity and make the most of it. We can only support them, coaching them in the issue that concerns them. The purpose of the personal coaching is to support them during the weeks between sessions, and to force them to reflect on what has happened. Otherwise it is easy to continue as you have always done when you*

get back to your workplace. (Stefan, leadership trainer and manager)

5.3 The target group

The program is described as a mixture between leadership and personal development. Accordingly, this is an attempt to bring these two areas together. The leadership trainers argue that they themselves represent this merge, but from different points of departure.

> *We tend to take different positions during the program. Stefan* [leadership trainer] *talks from the outside and in and I talk from the inside and out. The merge is represented by two different approaches. Depending on their* [the participants'] *major interest we attract them to a different extent. Personal development leads to me and leadership leads to Stefan. They tend to recognize themselves more in one of us.* (Jivan, leadership trainer)

Almost all of the people that come to the program are managers, but from different industries, different functions and different levels. Instead, the common denominator, if there is one, seems to be the attitude to their leadership.

> *Many of the people that come here have gone as far as possible with the tools and methods they had access to. They need something else to continue to develop. They have a longing for something else, but they don't know what. The longing concerns their whole life just as much as their leadership.* (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

Previous experiences within personal development vary among the participants, from nothing to a lot of courses, which is described by one of the participants from a previous year:

> *We were six participants, three ordinary and three... very special people (laughter). No, what I want to say is that there were three people like me, managers that wanted to get more out of their leadership and three who had spent many years on working with themselves... they were professional life seekers, who seemed to have been searching for very long, while we managers hadn't the same history of seeking, our seeking went on during the program.*

That was a very interesting combination of people. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Niklas' opinion that the participants came either from a background with a lot of personal development or from a background where they wanted more from their leadership is confirmed by participants from all the years I have studied and also from the leadership trainers. However, the leadership trainers believe that it does not matter if you have previous experience from personal development or not.

Things happen regardless of which level you start from at the beginning, so to speak. The important thing is that you are open and willing to experiment. But it is true that the program could mean different things for different people. People that have worked a lot with themselves tend to be unable to integrate this knowledge into their ordinary life. Personal development only brings separation. For them the program is mainly about integrating this into their working lives, while for others it could be completely new material. (Jivan, leadership trainer)

5.4 The leadership trainers' intentions and attitudes

Management programs in general are often concerned with teaching models and techniques, but the scope of this program is different. It does not concern the participants' abilities as managers in such a "direct" way.

The people that come here are very knowledgeable as managers and in their expert functions, but they don't know that much about themselves. That is what we are trying to help them with. (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

None of the leadership trainers have any formal education in psychotherapy or behavioural science. Two of them have business degrees at university level and all three have attended a lot of programs and courses in personal development. The leadership program is not based on an explicit theory, in an academic sense it could be seen as atheoretical. However, by atheoretical I only mean that the theories are not explicit. It is most evident that the program is guided by the leadership trainers' action theories. Even if the program does not rest on a number of models on how to be an effective leader, there are some models that represent the fundamental ideas of the program. Three of the most important models in the program make the relations between the

inside and the outside explicit and connect this to leadership. The first one is a pair of scales, where the stand represents the structure in the organization and the two scales represent outwards/doing and inwards/being respectively. The program aims at strengthening the connection between inner and outer and showing that it does not have to be either inner or outer. The structure must already exist, since the program does not focus on it directly.

> *Our society is very focused on doing rather than being. We search for happiness outside ourselves, instead of going inwards. Accordingly, all people in the western world have too much weight on the side of outwards/doing on the scales. If you simplify the picture, you could state that this unbalance is the root of all courses in personal development, to create a balance. I like this model very much as it, besides showing the connections between outwards/doing and inwards/being, also shows how we differ from programs in personal development. They usually communicate balance by attacking outwards/doing, thus taking away weight from that scale, which tends to make people passive. Instead, we try to put something new in the scale inwards/being without denying that we live in an outwards and doing oriented society.* (Jivan, leadership trainer)

The second model specifies in what order people should approach being and doing, according to the leadership trainers. Firstly it is about how (and who) you are – presence – then it is about what you do. The leadership trainers argue that the approach normally is the other way around. People think about what to do first and then, eventually, about how to be. According to them, techniques for how to do things are always helpful but they are only tools. It is the manager who uses the tools and he or she must be present in doing that.

A third model focuses on the work/life balance and consists of three different circles: Private, Social and Work. It represents the "I" in three different situations: Private, when I am alone; Social when I am together with friends and family; Work when I am at my workplace. The model shows that people fulfill themselves in these different contexts, but it is important not to live one's life in just one of the circles. The circles should be more or less equal in quality according to the leadership trainers, but they argue that for most managers the Work-circle represents the majority of the "I" and the Private-circle is often the most undersized.

All our models represent attitudes to life. They are not intellectual; they are about how I am. Our main idea is to bring ourselves into what we do. It is a way of life more than anything else. (Stefan, leadership trainer and manager)

The program starts by finding the personal vision of the participants, which has two purposes. Firstly, the participants have to take a stand regarding what they want to do during the program. Secondly, this vision will guide each participant's program, and ultimately their daily life and leadership.

We don't start anything until all participants know why they are there. Therefore the work with their personal visions takes time; and we have to let it take time, as it is essential. (Jivan, leadership trainer)

We stand by their decision to develop also when they waver. Then we connect to their personal vision. (Stefan, leadership trainer and manager)

Teaching is only a small part of the program and no teaching is done without practising what has been said. This is a conscious decision and it makes the result last according to the leadership trainers.

They [the participants] *experience what works and what doesn't work. Their experience gives a deep understanding that lasts. You bring it into any situation in your life. That is true development, which you never lose. Compare that to teaching on "what you should do"... that will soon disappear.* (Jivan, leadership trainer)

The leadership trainers emphasize the importance of "individual solutions" in the program and that there is no general "best way", but on the contrary they argue that there definitely is a "best way" in *approaching* the program, which they also claim is closely related to how successful managers are.

To be open is necessary to get a maximal effect of the program; to be curious and to have the courage to try everything and see what happens. Otherwise it becomes an intellectual mind game. [...] Successful managers are open; I can say that both from research and my own experience. They are not constrained by a lot of conceptions. Most managers can't separate ideas from facts; we are only interested in facts here. We help the managers to

understand which ideas are limiting them. (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

The leadership trainers claim that they do not try to impose a certain role model of "good leadership" on the participants, but that the "openness" is important in that case as well.

No one could develop into something that I as a leadership trainer want. I will not lead them from one thing to another. The participants' acceptance of themselves as they are is the core. There are no demands from the outside, from us. We are a support in their process to go inwards. (Stefan, leadership trainer and manager)

5.5 Organizational diffusion

Normally, it is not the managers that finance the program; it is their organizations. What then could their organization expect from their participation in the program? The leadership trainers' message is clear: This program makes a difference, not only for the person, but for the organization. The main argument is that a successful leader creates a successful organization.

Managers that can access their energy will not be burned out; they can work a lot without being burned out. We help the leader to find and support that energy in themselves and in their subordinates. Compare it to symbolic leadership: A message from a symbolic leader becomes "do like I do". That will not be successful as it is adjusted to him or her and not to the subordinates. A reflective manager understands that if people can't leave their work on time, then we have structural problems: Either we need to employ more people or we have to change our working hours. The managers in our program practise reflecting on their situations, which enables improvements in their organizations. (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

5.6 Analysing the training

Existential Leadership is an introspective management training that is closely related to personal growth training described in chapter 2.1.5. The training has no explicit theoretical ground, but as noted both by Conger

(2001) and Hammer (1998) the view of the self is implicitly based on humanistic/existential psychology. Conger (2001) described the main focus of personal growth training in management in four main areas: Personal mastery, empowerment, peer and trainer feedback, and reflection. They serve very well to describe the focus of Existential Leadership as well.

- Personal mastery: The focus is on *experiencing* leadership through different exercises and role-plays.
- Empowerment: The leadership trainers emphasize that the participants shall empower themselves and empower others (primarily their subordinates). Even if they do not use the word empowerment explicitly, the preparation for the managers to take responsibility for themselves and their actions (i.e. they shall not act automatically on social pressure and expectations) and to empower others (not trying to change other people or control them) is one of the fundamental elements of the training. Furthermore, taking responsibility for their work/life balance is also related to this area.
- Peer and trainer feedback: Feedback is also one of the main parts of the training. Both the other participants and the leadership trainer give feedback on experiences and accounts, but the leadership trainers mainly use coaching to help the participants to further reflect upon the matter. The coaching technique used is in line with humanistic psychotherapy as described by Rogers (1961), i.e. support the participants with questions related to the participants' statements rather than answers or analyses.
- Reflection: Through reflection the participants are encouraged to find their personal visions and to discover their talents and leadership potential and recognize in which situations they are creative.

Management training often mirrors some kind of management discourse. Consciously or not the leadership trainers are carriers of certain preferred views of management, even if they emphasize that it is personal leadership that should be developed. The slogan "*We transform managers to leaders*", shows that the definition of management and leadership is related to the people - managers or leaders - that perform management or leadership in line with Bennis & Nanus (1985) and Conger (1992), as well as there is an evident preference for leadership and leaders instead of management and managers. Furthermore, despite the leadership trainers' claims that they do not try to impose a certain role model of "good leadership" on the participants, the preference for leaders and not managers is an example of a role model of "good leadership"; and it is

not the only one, there are several, even if the leadership trainers seem unaware of it.

The implicit role models of "good leadership" seem to have their origin in preference for personal growth discourse before management discourse, which means that "personal leadership", i.e. a "free" leadership based on the participants' unique abilities, is limited to what is in line with personal growth discourse. From this we get the following implicit preferences from the training:

- from controlling to coaching
- from pushing to facilitating
- from directing to involving
- from managers (specialists, experts) to leaders (generalists, humanists)

From managers to leaders has already been discussed, but the other three preferences are mainly rooted in the quest for empowering people. To empower people means to let them take control of their lives, i.e. as managers we should not control, push or direct our subordinates, but instead coach them (to find the solution themselves), facilitate (enable them to find the solution themselves) and involve (let them be a part of the decision making). Consequently, to advocate personal leadership and to be heavily rooted in a discourse that implicitly decides what is right and wrong, good and bad, makes the personal aspect rather limited.

Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the leadership trainers themselves make sense of the training. In the theoretical framework a social entity's aspiration to make sense of itself was described as its identity process (Albert, 1998). Existential Leadership has most evidently an own identity process, mainly driven by the leadership trainers. Furthermore, in the theoretical framework, Czarniawska (2000; 2002) argued that identities were established in relation to others, where identity (who am I like?) and alterity (who am I not like?) were important parts of the process. In chapter 2.1.5 regarding personal growth training in management, the contradictory logic behind personal growth discourse and management discourse were discussed. In Existential Leadership these contradictions are not at all challenged. Instead they are implicitly used in the identity process of the program in a contradictory identity/alterity process.

The leadership trainers identify *to* other leadership programs in order to define themselves *from* other personal growth programs: *We are interested in leadership, not in living out emotions like personal growth*

programs. People that have attended a lot of personal growth programs have often problems with integrating their insights to their daily life... the programs mainly create separation. But we integrate the insight into leadership matters, which make it easier for the managers to use the insights in their daily life. (Jivan, leadership trainer)

But at the same time they identify *to* personal growth programs to define themselves *from* other leadership programs: *IFL and other organizers use the same words as we do, but they are not really into personal growth as we are.* (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

Trollestad (1994) showed that the conception of human nature in management training in Sweden was characterized by polarities, which were not openly and critically challenged in relation to each other and the organizers shifted between the two different perspectives seemingly unaware of the fact and totally without questioning the incompatibility of the two views. Even though this program is not based on the same two views as in Trollestad's (1994) study, there are still two, to a large extent, incompatible and contradictory discourses that meet. Similarly with Trollestad's (1994) study the contradictions are never challenged or criticized, but the question is left for the participants to deal with. The next part addresses the participants' dealing with this problem and other issues, when the managers' experiences of attending the training are described.

6. ATTENDING INTROSPECTIVE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

In total there were ten participating managers this year. Of them I was able to follow six from four very different organizations. There were three department managers from a public organization called Alpha here (Marianne, David and Rikard), two group managers from two IT consultancy firms, Gamma (Maria) and Delta (Christina), and one staff training manager from the air force (Östen). I expected to meet six people who were very interested in personal development and who had participated in many similar courses and programs, but that proved to be totally wrong. Only one of the managers (Östen) had any experience from personal development courses.

6.1 Participants from Alpha

Alpha is a public authority and its activities are described like this in an information folder:

> *Alpha works for good animal health by preventing, diagnosing and controlling contagious diseases in animals. The institute is also concerned with safeguarding human health as well as the environment.*

At the time of the study the organization had 415 employees of which 15 % were Ph D:s or higher, 65 % had a university degree or a higher level of education. Furthermore, 55 % of the staff were women. Alpha is not a "controlling authority". Instead it has an expert function and it primarily serves the Board of Agriculture and practicing veterinarians.

Alpha is managed by a general director, who is appointed by the government. Historically, the general director has always been a veterinarian, as was the general director at the time of the study. The veterinarians are the most influential group of employees in the organization. They are only the second largest group, but they have the most important positions in the organization, since the general director is a veterinarian as well as most of the department managers. The organization culture is thereby closely related to the profession culture of the veterinarians[35].

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[35] See Andersson (2003b; 2004) for further elaboration

Being a veterinarian is more than a title… it describes who you are and defines you as a part of a particular professional community. (Rikard, participating manager)

There are no middle managers in the organization. Instead the 25 department managers are directly subordinate to the general director. The different departments are relatively free to decide about their own activities and therefore Alpha in fact seems to consist of a group of diversified departments that are relatively loosely coupled. The flat organizational structure is to some extent seen as related to the dominating position of the veterinarians within the organization.

The problem here is that the most skilled veterinarians are promoted to managers, and then you don't have the time any more to be a veterinarian. We are lucky to have a veterinarian as general director, if we would get a politician there, it would be a disaster. We are 25 department managers directly subordinate to the general director and that is perhaps too many, but it would be impossible to have middle managers in between, because the ones who are suitable for such a job, don't want it and those who want it, we don't want to have… that is a problem here. All the veterinarians want to be veterinarians and not managers, but at the same time, we want veterinarians as managers and not anyone else... (Rikard, participating manager)

The veterinarians that are appointed department managers usually continue with veterinary work, in particular research, diagnostics and advisory service, even after their appointment.

I am operational as well as being a manager. That is the usual procedure here. Manager is something you are "on top" of everything else. (Marianne, participating manager)

The three managers from Alpha participating in the program are all department managers. Even if they are rather different as individuals they have similarities according to the general director:

You could hardly see Rikard, Marianne and David as average department managers. I think that they are extraordinarily good at their jobs, both as specialists and managers. (Superior manager to Rikard, Marianne & David)

6.1.1 Marianne

<u>Marianne as a person and as a manager</u>

Marianne is middle-aged and is a veterinarian by profession and holds a Ph D in virology. She has worked at Alpha almost all her working life. She is department manager, but she is also operatively involved in the business as the responsible veterinarian for diseases of certain animals.

The function of the department is rather diverse. The veterinarians that are experts on some animals mostly have contact with other veterinarians, while others also has a lot of contact with breeders. The owners of the animals dealt with at the department are diverse as well since there are both non-professional and professional owners.

Marianne is, and has always been, very devoted to Alpha, but she would like the organization to be less diversified and with a clear direction.

> *We are a diversified organization, we are more like a galleria of 20 companies than a connected whole. Many department managers work in their own rights and hardly see themselves as subordinate to the general director...Sometimes I miss a clear direction...a direction that is created centrally. I have brought this issue up in the manager meetings, but I have received little response. It seems like we are working to meet new conditions, but the organizational structure has not been redefined to these conditions. For me as a person who follows rules, it can be very frustrating...I have some ideas about a new structure, which I have ventilated in workshops, but we'll see if they become reality.* (Marianne, participating manager)

When I tried to understand Marianne's leadership style through interviews with the other managers, they painted a picture of a most respected but also in some aspects difficult manager. When starting to describe how she was as a manager and as a person, three of the managers, independently of each other, made a square with their hands saying: "*Well, she is a little bit like this.*"

> *Marianne is probably one of the most intelligent managers here at Alpha. She is so clever and clear-sighted, but I feel that she is not able to realize her full potential because of the way she is. She has an extremely sharp tongue and she is very aggressive in meetings. I am not sure if she understands that she scares the shit out of*

people, only by being the one she is. She could slaughter people verbally at a meeting. She also has a tendency to be a little square in her way; she is very focused on rules and is not flexible at all. I hope that she gets something from this program, because she has a greater potential than the job she has today. I like her very much and often seek her advice, but as I said: She frightens people. (Peer to Marianne)

I am glad that Marianne has found a course in personal development. She has to change the way she is, I think she would relate to others so much better if she didn't have such an aggressive and uncompromising manner. (Staff manager)

Marianne is extremely clear-sighted, so she almost always makes the right diagnosis of a problem or a situation. Often she has provided the solution, before other people have fully understood the problem. When she provides the solution, the others only laugh, because they are not even on the same train. Unfortunately, she is not as good at presenting the diagnosis...her way of presenting "the right answer" tends to create resistance, especially from men less intelligent than her. (Participating manager and peer to Marianne)

On the other hand her subordinates were very satisfied with her and did not see anything problematic in her way of being, which perhaps could be explained by how she describes her most important management activities:

For me, to be a manager means to make way for my subordinates, to give them the opportunities to do a good job. The basic structure enabling them to do a good job should be there, they should not have to worry about such things. That is my responsibility and what I do as a manager. (Marianne, participating manager)

Before the program

Marianne became a manager in 1998 and her superior manager promised that if she found a management course she wanted to participate in, she was free to do so. However, she wanted to be a manager for a couple of years first so that she would have something to reflect upon when she attended a management program. When she started to look for a suitable management program in 2002, she had some ideas of what she was searching for, and she was sure about what she was not looking for.

I didn't want an American concept course and I didn't want any of those special courses for women... they make me want to puke. I had heard some very positive things about this program, so I went to one of Sky's information meetings. I liked the way they presented the course. They did not focus on "professional life seekers", but managers who wanted to get something more out of their leadership. (Marianne, participating manager)

Marianne felt that she wanted the program mainly for herself as a person, which she thought would influence her leadership as well.

I want some new influences and new perspectives... on how to deal with people, as it is what I am supposed to do as manager (laughter). To be honest, I am not really that interested in people... only the people I have a close relation to. Maybe the program can help me so it will not be such an effort for me to relate to other people. (Marianne, participating manager)

Of the three managers from Alpha, Marianne seems to have been the one who took the initiative. She had been at the information meeting and she then presented the information to the staff department and some other department managers. Marianne did not want Alpha to buy a course from the organizers, as she was afraid that the course would be considered as an opportunity to discuss the internal problems of the organization rather than a general course about leadership. Initially she preferred to participate in the training alone, but the organizer persuaded her that the process would be easier if she had some people to share the experiences with. Fortunately, two other managers, David and Rikard, found the program interesting as well and decided to join it too.

During the program

Marianne describes herself, and is also described by others, as very scientific in her ways. After the first course week she had a preference for the parts that she could understand:

The elements that I get a kick out of are the mental practices. They [the leadership trainers] are so good at helping you to find your own answers. Being forced to formulate your own thoughts was useful and so was not being able to finish when you wanted to. You were always given that extra question that made you go further. But they were also very sensitive as to how far they could go with

different people. So the mental practices were very good, but I don't get that much out of jumping around, puffing and shaking. (Marianne, participating manager)

Marianne experienced some changes in her attitudes to herself as a person and as a manager during the program. Already after the first course week, she stated that:

An important insight for me was that I don't have to be available for everybody all the time. I have a responsibility to myself as well. I think I have made it too easy for my subordinates. I take over things that they in fact are responsible for. That is perhaps very convenient for them, but not for me as it means that I have to sit here all evening... I have been better at drawing the line when it comes to what I should do... at least in my head; I'm not always able to live by it. (Marianne, participating manager)

Marianne thought that her subordinates would notice that she did not do all these things for them any more, and she was afraid they would experience this as if she was making their daily life more complicated. It must have been a worry for her, since she repeated this in every interview I did with her during the whole process. However, none of the subordinates mentioned anything about it. In the beginning they did not notice a big change at all, but one of them noticed something that she considered to be important.

When Marianne came back from the first course week she wanted us to do an exercise concerning responsibility. I had very much to do so I snapped back that I hadn't time for any crap. Then Marianne said: "Ok, then don't, it's not a big deal." Wow, that was not the Marianne that left for the course; she would have fought me until I did it. However, this made me so curious about the exercise that I did it, and it was very useful... I think I fooled myself there (laughter). (Subordinate to Marianne)

Marianne experienced the reflection during the courses as mainly elaborating things she already knew, but had not understood the consequences of fully. Like these thoughts regarding being manager:

I am not that interested in the position as such...being a manager I mean, but it is extremely important for me to be able to influence the organization and to feel that my competence is being used in the best interest of the organization. Being a department manager

is not a guarantee for influence, rather it means responsibility for the subordinates and less freedom in what I do...so I have started to question why I am a manager. (Marianne, participating manager)

Between the second and the third course week I visited a department meeting at Marianne's department. Marianne became stuck in a situation with one of her subordinates. The factual matter did not seem that delicate; it concerned how some impositions should be made. The fight that came out of this seemed to be rooted in some bigger issue. The whole discussion revolved around the fact that her subordinate did not want to give any answers and would not let anybody in concerning "her area", but Marianne did not give up. She tried and tried to get through, but they never connected. The subordinate's tone was very irritated immediately when the issue came up. She got more and more irritated and became short and sarcastic in her answers. Marianne kept her voice calm and spoke clearly all the time. She had several opportunities to drop the issue when the conversation seemed to stop on its own accord, but she did not give in. The subordinate was so affected that she did not seem to hear that she contradicted herself. The conversation seemed to go in circles, where Marianne chased her subordinate around.

In an interview the day after this meeting Marianne was frustrated, but she related the meeting to an exercise during the last course week and an insight she got there.

We investigated a power struggle in a role-play during the course. I chose a person that I perceive as very similar to [her subordinate]. *In the role-play I became furious, just like I felt yesterday. When I tried to understand that feeling, I recognized that the situation was very similar to something I was very used to. This is exactly the type of fights that I used to have with my father; someone who had already decided that what I said was wrong or stupid. It did not matter what I actually said, I was judged in advance. I get the same feeling, when we have these fights. I get furious, and I cannot stop myself.* (Marianne, participating manager)

Even if she was furious during the meeting, she never did "lose her head". She seemed very calm, even if it was clear that she was frustrated. However, she did not seem to see this as progress. On the contrary, she saw the fight as a failure.

In four years I have not figured out how to handle [her subordinate]. There is no way that I can get through to her and I hardly think this program will change that. Jivan [leadership trainer] just repeats "be present, and she will change"…yeah, right… you saw how well it went yesterday (laughter). Sometimes I get irritated about this untouchable standard solution they [the leadership trainers] provide…it's a pretty picture, but the world simply isn't that nice. (Marianne, participating manager)

However, Marianne noticed a change in her reactions from the meeting and it is a change that she had perceived in other situations as well, but she is not sure if she sees it as positive or negative.

In a sense the course has made me care less… especially when it comes to small things. It might be good for those closest to me, as I might be less controlling and my attitude to other people's actions might be more positive, but I am a little afraid that I will became dissociated. I mean, even if I got furious yesterday, the feelings never got to me. An hour after the meeting they didn't affect me anymore. (Marianne, participating manager)

After the third week Marianne had a new challenge in a meeting, when she was ordered to temporarily run a department with many problems. The subordinates were uncommitted and gave any manager a hard time. Marianne suspected that she was put there as she has a reputation of being tough and never gives in, which partly was confirmed in an interview with the staff manager:

The program is expensive and it gives me the opportunity to ask more of the participating managers. In Marianne's case I confess that I have taken advantage of that, when another department temporarily needed a manager, but I also thought that her courage and toughness would suit the situation that was there. (Staff manager)

Marianne decided not to fight with the staff, but to try something different. She thought she would try to meet them and try to understand what was making them so negative.

At the first meeting I decided to try only to be very present. If this had been a year ago, I would have prepared for the meeting a week in advance, gone in there armed to the teeth and started to push them. Now I just went in there and started with a little exercise. I

asked them to define their most important responsibility, the responsibility that they found most fun and the responsibility they would prefer not to have. At first they just looked at me like I was mad, then we started and it was rather fun. They seemed genuinely surprised at having fun in a meeting and not having an intellectual war with the manager. (Marianne, participating manager)

It seemed like it was easier to successfully change behaviour in another setting than the normal one, and Marianne perceived this meeting as a success. The staff manager at Alpha also confirmed the success:

Being deputy head of the other department is one example of success for Marianne, as she was exactly the type of manager they needed at that time - a manager who dared to take a stand. Having said that, I would have wished that the program had changed her more. (Staff manager)

From the role-plays in the program, Marianne started to understand her preference for certain qualities in relations at work.

I have always known that I want subordinates who are self-going. I don't want to exercise such a direct leadership that passive subordinates require. But I have also started to understand that I want strong people around me. When I push I want to feel that there is somebody there... somebody that has an opinion...I can't stand turncoats. Probably that is why I am surrounded by people at my department that are perceived as somewhat difficult by others in Alpha, but they are all strong... and I prefer a strong and complicated person to a turncoat that says anything to please you. (Marianne, participating manager)

After some weeks in the program, Marianne experienced that she had been "softer" in meetings. However, despite the fact that many of the other managers said that they wished she could be softer, they occasionally seemed to miss Marianne "the angry one".

The management meetings are often meaningless events, always one-way communication where higher management or someone else talks about something that very few of us are interested in. In a way I have become the quality control of these meetings, as everybody knows that I don't let people get away with being unclear or vague. Then I ask them to make things clearer. Thereby I am seen as a tough bitch, who always complains. Now, when I

can relax more and decide that it's not my responsibility to fight everyone that is unclear, I can see that the others still expect me to make things clear for them. If someone is unclear, some of my colleagues give me a look like "Are you really going to let him get away with this?". Before I would have acted automatically on this expectation, now I can resist the automatic behaviour and instead make up my own mind regarding whether I want to initiate the argument or not. (Marianne, participating manager)

After the program

After the program, one of the transformations Marianne experienced concerned her behaviour in meetings as mentioned above. She tries to analyze it:

I used to be very hard in meetings. I couldn't let things go, even the smallest detail. Now I am better at choosing which power struggles to take. I still have fights, but I don't have to fight people as soon as I think they are wrong or haven't done something perfectly. I have understood that I won't die from accepting things that are not 100 % perfect. (Marianne, participating manager)

Marianne experiences that it is one thing to have gained a lot of insights from the program and it is another thing to live in accordance with these new insights.

As a whole I have brought very much with me from the program, but the question is how much I am capable of putting into practice. What I feel I have done is that I am able to come to a halt now and then, and let myself reflect upon something instead of automatically doing something. At least I am now aware of when I go into automatic behaviour, but I am not always able to hinder it. (Marianne, participating manager)

After the full five weeks, Marianne tried to put into words her experience of the program as a whole:

It feels like these five weeks have lifted me to a higher level. Now I have to work to stay at this new level. But I don't want more, five weeks were enough... at least for now. (Marianne, participating manager)

Previously, I quoted some of the other managers' comments regarding Marianne. It seemed evident that they wished that she to some extent would change. Her superior manager seemed to have more concrete plans for her. During an interview in the middle of the program, he clearly signaled that he had some intentions.

> *I have bigger plans for Marianne, if she manages well with this program. I think she has great potential, but she needs to become smoother.* (Marianne's superior manager)

Some months after this, just after the management training was completed, it became clear what these bigger plans consisted of, when Marianne was also appointed head of the research group at Alpha and thereby received a chair in the executive group.

Although this news sounded like a step forward, Marianne later experienced it as her biggest frustration. Half a year after having finished the program, Marianne was very irritated about how things worked in her organization.

> *I am very disappointed in the executive group. I really thought that it was the place where the important questions regarding the organization were discussed, but it isn't. We rarely discuss important issues. We just receive information. There is a preparation group, consisting of six people, where all decisions appear to be made, so I don't understand why there is an executive group...or to be honest, I understand it perfectly well, but that insight makes me depressed. The executive group consists of twelve people, six men and six women, perfectly in line with equality opportunity rights demands. But the preparation group, which has all the power, consists of only men. But it doesn't exist in the organization plan, so they don't have to explain it to any equality advocate. So right now, I am grateful that I am leaving the organization... otherwise I would probably have started a war here.* (Marianne, participating manager)

Leaving the organization? Yes, half a year after having finished the leadership program Marianne decided to accept a job offer from the European Commission in Dublin.

> *I have always wanted to work abroad in an English-speaking country. I thought this was a perfect opportunity to do this. It is a contract limited to three years and from my organization it is*

considered to be an additional qualification. They want people from here to get insight in the work of the Commission. Moreover, they value that people from here get recruited to the Commission... it is a quality sign. And from my point of view the salary is much higher... but the job is very different from this. I will be an executor who only does what I am told, without having any influence. I don't know how that will work out (laughter). (Marianne, participating manager)

This means that Marianne, after having completed the management training left her manager position to become a specialist, but she did not think that the management training was a waste of time.

Maybe it is doubtful if you should consider it as mainly a leadership program. I don't know. I think it had the greatest impact on me as a person and maybe that will influence me also as a leader, but it will be useful in other jobs and positions as well. (Marianne, participating manager)

Her peers agree that maybe it was mainly on the personal level Marianne gained from the program.

Well... I saw something happen during the courses, but I could never see the Marianne from the courses here at Alpha...here she was still ill-tempered and angry. But something has definitely happened in her personal life...before she had a tendency to always put herself last, she has always been there for everybody...subordinates, friends... but now she works actively to create a good life for herself...and I think the job in Dublin is a part of this "life project". (Peer and participating manager)

6.1.2 David

<u>About David as a person and as a manager</u>

David is middle aged and veterinarian by profession. He is the head of a department with 30 subordinates. It is a diverse department, especially in terms of the mixture of people; there are veterinarians, laboratory analysts, administrative staff and butchers. David has been the head of the department for three years.

David likes to be together with other people and he has always been surrounded by a lot of people.

> *I have grown up in a family where we were five children. I got married when I was 22 years old and had children. Since then I have lived a family life with a lot of people around me, even if my family today isn't the same as it was then.* (David, participating manager)

> *He is a very nice person, who allows a lot of freedom. But I wish he could delegate and demand responsibility from his subordinates to a greater extent... he doesn't seem that fond of demanding things from other people. His nicest character traits are also what make him a little weak as a manager. He is so extremely social and wants to be friends with everybody.* (Subordinate to David)

David also expresses himself that the hardest thing about being a manager is when you have to be hard on people: "*It is not easy for a social guy like me, who wants to be friends with everybody.*"

David is described as being "father-like" and his co-workers say that it feels safe around him.

> *You know that you are secure with David. He has several women as subordinates, who are extremely competent, but with very bad self-confidence. With him as manager they have taken on a new lease of life to their full capacity, and I think the security they feel around him is the main reason.* (Peer and participating manager)

David is veterinarian, just as Marianne and Rikard. Like most managers at Alpha David sees himself mainly as a veterinarian and he seems a little confused regarding both being veterinarian and manager, which his subordinates notice as well.

> *Well, after all I am a veterinarian and that is what I want to be. I am not a manager and I am definitely not a budget expert (laughter), I must be one of the world's lousiest business administrators. Still, I am a manager... hmmm... but I am a veterinarian in my profession.* (David, participating manager)

> *Sometimes I wish that David could settle down and fully accept being a manager. That is a full-time job, but he is still trying to do some research and be involved in routine work... But I understand*

him, I would never stop being a veterinarian to become a manager.
(Subordinate to David)

The role of being both veterinarian and manager together with the diverse collection of people in the department creates a rather complicated situation. It means that David depending on different situations has many different relations to his subordinates, especially when it comes to his subordinate veterinarians.

> *When it comes to diagnostics, I seek him as a veterinarian colleague, but of course there are other situations when I seek him as a manager... for example when there is a problem with a customer or regarding my working situation.* (Subordinate to David)

> *I enjoy the mixture of people. My father was a doctor, but he cared very much about his friends independent of class or work, so I have been brought up that way, I like people for who they are. And in fact, despite the fact that I am a Ph D, I think I have the greatest support among my subordinates with the lowest education. They would do anything for me... maybe because they know it is mutual.* (David, participating manager)

Since he became manager for the department, he has turned it around from being a problem department to one of the most profitable at Alpha. However, he is reluctant to admit that it is because of what he has done.

> *I think it is mainly luck...and of course it wasn't that hard to do better than the manager before me. He had a military style and was very difficult and authoritarian...and his erratic manner didn't make it easier. His subordinates were used to public tellings-off and many were afraid of him. He neglected his duties and he finally got fired. Just by being different from him I have managed rather well, I have come far by only being a normal person.* (David, participating manager)

<u>Before the program</u>

It was mainly management training David wanted, he was not particularly interested in the personal development part. He described what he wanted from the program:

110

It's easy...I need a management course. When I was appointed manager for this department I said: "Impossible, I can't be a manager, I don't know how to do it". But they said: "Of course you know, just be yourself"...and in a sense that has worked rather well for me...but still, I would like to learn what it means to be a manager...I mean to really *be a manager.* (David, participating manager)

David did not say much about his expectations regarding the program being focusing on personal development. He certainly did not admit to me that he had been scared. However, from other sources I found out that he might not have been as comfortable as he looked.

David talked a lot with me before the course. "What if I go completely nuts? And come back as a totally different person?" I said that I was sure that he shouldn't worry, but he seemed nervous that someone would take control of his mind and that he would lose control. I think that according to him all forms of reflection and digging deep into yourself may be harmful (laughter). Still, he went. I think his curiosity got the upper hand. He's not that analytical as a person, he rather tries if he is curious...he's a man of action. (Subordinate to David)

During the program

The experience of the first course was a little shocking, but not in a bad sense. David experienced some immediate positive results as well.

If you had showed me a picture of me standing there chakra-breathing[36] like a maniac some months ago, I would just have laughed. I could hardly see myself like that, I am not really the type. (David, participating manager)

In the beginning, I felt that the low pace of the program was stressful. I wondered when it would start, but soon I understood that this was a part of the process. These long breaks forced us to slow down and it made reflection possible. (David, participating manager)

The low pace seemed to have some effects, which he noticed when he returned to his own organization after the first course week.

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[36] A kind of meditation where you use your breathing to "go deeper into yourself".

I felt very relaxed when returning to my organization. I eased off and I stayed like that. Usually I am very temperamental, and I can get very angry... fast. But in the weeks after the first course, it was impossible to make me angry, not even my wife managed to do it... and I can guarantee she tried (laughter). I don't know what it is, but it's like I have got something with me from the course, something that's in me. (David, participating manager)

David had another more concrete positive experience after returning from the first course week. It was in a performance appraisal interview, with a subordinate he did not believe to be doing a very good job.

I don't like to have these tough conversations; usually I postpone such things as long as possible. But I thought I would try what I had tested in the course, just to be there for him, not trying to push him anywhere, only to coach him. It went extremely well, and afterwards he said: "That was the best performance appraisal interview I have had... ever, with you or anyone else. It's obvious that you have been on a course" (laughter). A few weeks later he changed department within our organization and was able to work with what he most of all wanted. I feel that I was able to help him make that decision himself, instead of trying to push him like I would have done earlier... and probably would have failed and made us both furious. (David, participating manager)

After the second course week I was able to see David in action during another performance appraisal interview. It was with one of his subordinate managers. The interview lasted about one and a half hours and concerned what the subordinate manager's next step would be, what kind of courses or other competence development he wanted to participate in and also the staff at his section. David seemed in a way embarrassed after the interview and excused himself to me:

This is one of the performance appraisal interviews that is most difficult. You could see that it is hard to help someone develop who is more developed than yourself (laughter). (David, participating manager)

However, even if David experienced the situation as difficult I could not see what he implicitly told me that I had seen: a failure or at least a not so good performance appraisal interview. What I saw was a manager holding a performance appraisal interview with a subordinate that is an

expert in his field. During some parts of the interview he acted as a generalist, who helped him to find his own answers and needs by himself. When discussing his subordinates, he acted as a supervisor or a peer (although he is superior) giving advice about what to do, without imposing any solutions. He smoothly changed roles during the performance appraisal interview, depending on the kind of issue that was dealt with.

Some of his subordinates noticed that he in some situations seemed to try to act differently, but along with that sometimes came some clumsy beginner's trial and error when he tried to apply new roles.

> *I feel that one of David's limitations as a manager is that he has difficulty in drawing the line. He is not always very clear and distinct with the lines. But now on some occasions I have noticed that he has tried to be more distinct than usual. He has tried to emphasize what he wants. Still, it is obvious that it's new for him... he tends to over-do it, but I can take this shakiness in his behaviour as I think something good will come out of it.* (Subordinate to David)

David reflected a lot upon the structure of his department during the course weeks. He noticed that there were some problems, but he did not think that it was necessary to change it.

> *The structure is adjusted in relation to some problematic people I have at my department. Especially one of the section managers under me... he creates conflicts with everyone, so I have taken the responsibility for the personnel under him myself, to avoid problems. He has kept only the administrative duties connected to his position, but still he has his position. I have some strange solutions, because of people that are not easy to handle, but I guess that is the way it is, you are stuck with the people you have.* (David, participating manager)

After a few course weeks David seemed to lose interest in the program. He did not have time to integrate all that he experienced during the courses into his daily life. He expressed it as if he put the process "*on hold*" until he had time to take care of it.

> *I don't think anyone could notice any big changes in me. Rather I see it as I have a lot of new stuff to reflect upon, but I have to give myself time to do that. Then I think something bigger will happen*

to me, but it won't come until many months after the program.
(David, participating manager)

The leadership trainers noticed David's lack of interest as well.

David…yeah, I honestly don't know if he will bring much with him from this program. It feels like we are back at the starting point every new course week. He seems to forget about it between the courses. I know several times when we have said "But David, we discussed that last time", and he responds "Ah, I had forgotten about that". (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

<u>After the program</u>

Eight months after the program had ended neither David nor his subordinates noticed any big differences in him as a person or as a manager, but David was sure that he *felt* different even if he was uncertain whether it was noticeable for outsiders or not.

I have become calmer. I don't get stressed as easily as before. I still have as much to do as before, but it doesn't get to me. I have not had palpitations since I started the program. Before the program it happened rather often; the reason was stress, nothing else. (David, participating manager)

Palpitation or not might be hard to see for his subordinates, but two of them noticed changes in his way of being, which could be interpreted as he had become calmer.

He used to act very impulsively before. Even if he still has this tendency he has become much calmer. Now he's able to think ten seconds before acting and that spares both him and us some wrong and impulsive decisions. (Subordinate to David)

He used to have a very male decision-making style... you know: "Here is the problem, what should we do?". But many of us women like to talk for fifteen minutes first, before we have defined the problem (laughter)... previously, he lost interest very fast then and we never had the chance to reach what we wanted, but now he seems more able to listen for this extra time... (Subordinate to David)

As told before, the program was an opportunity for David to reflect on his current leadership situation and his organization. Already during the program he identified that the structure he had at his department was not optimal, but he did not take care about the problem until after the program. It was when he realized that he risked losing his most valuable subordinate if he did not act immediately. However, the program had been an opportunity to identify the problem and he could then act rather quickly.

> *Of course I knew that the structure at the department wasn't optimal, but it wasn't until I understood how much more difficult it made the job for my best veterinarian that it became a real problem.* [His subordinate] *might not be my most experienced veterinarian, but she is by far the best. She is the kind of person that doesn't like to tell people what to do, and the fact that she as a person knows best, but doesn't have a position from which she can use this knowledge, makes it problematic. By appointing her manager I got a situation where she can continue to do what she already does, but she can do it by right of her position, which makes her feel better in the situation. I think she might have avoided saying when things were wrong, because she did not like to get on her high horses and tell her equals what to do. Now, we can use her competency fully, the structure doesn't hold her back.* (David, participating manager)

By changing the structure of the department, David succeeded in keeping his best veterinarian at his department.

6.1.3 Rikard

<u>Rikard as a person and as a manager</u>

Rikard is middle-aged and a veterinarian by education and profession. He has been a department manager for nine years. The focus and the activities of each department at Alpha are very closely related to the interest and ambitions of the department manager. They are relatively free to decide over the activities of the department. When being asked to describe Rikard, several people started with "*He is a scientist*". Accordingly the focus of his department is mainly research, and the main financing of the activities is through research grants.

The departments at Alpha are very diverse. You have departments, where activities are exclusively financed by regular sales and the other extreme is Rikard's department, which is almost exclusively involved in research. He runs it like a branch of the university. (Peer and participating manager)

Rikard describes himself as a "reluctant manager", who prefers subordinates that are self-going.

What I do as a manager? As little as possible! I want to have as much time as possible for my operative work and my research...so I don't want people that have to be directed. I want people who take their own responsibility. People have rather free hands; I empower and encourage them and they do their job. But it has become harder and harder...it is like people expect you to be "more of a manager when you grow older". When I became department manager I was one of the youngest at the department, now I am among the oldest...so, slowly and reluctantly I have started to accept to be more of a manager. (Rikard, participating manager)

Rikard is perceived as a very nice person. His peers have a hard time to understand what he could gain from this kind of management training.

I have no idea why Rikard and David are in this training. I can't really say what they could gain from it. I think they are curious; they just had to try it, that's my only explanation. (Peer to Rikard & David)

It's always fun around Rikard. He's a person that you always stop and talk to when you meet him in the corridors. His personality invites it. (Peer to Rikard)

Nearly all the people I talked to about Rikard, mentioned that he did not seem to care about what people think about him. He dresses like he wants, and often he has forgotten to button his shirt. However, one of his peers doubts that it is such "random and unconcerned behaviour".

Everybody thinks that Rikard is so open and unconcerned about what other people think because of his way of being and his way of dressing. But only because you dress like a bum, burp out loud and tell jokes about everything, you are not automatically unconcerned

about what others think. I think it might be partly planned behaviour from his part... strengthening his role as a researcher. (Peer and participating manager)

That Rikard is a "fun guy" is something that everybody seems to agree on. However, this is not an exclusively positive side.

He always tells jokes, but sometimes it becomes too much. Especially when a lot of people are gathered, like in a management meeting, then he sometimes makes four jokes in a row, when three would have been more than enough (laughter). But he's a bit theatrical I guess that is why. (Peer to Rikard)

I think his joking has become a strategy to avoid seriousness and feelings that he doesn't want to meet. It's mainly an escape. (Lelle, assisting leadership trainer)

Rikard's subordinates have a very positive impression of him and during a department meeting, which I attended, I was struck by the very friendly atmosphere. Most of the people had worked together for a long time, and there were a lot of stories about Rikard's character.

He can't sit still. I remember once, when we were going by car to a conference. Rikard normally always brings something to read. There is always a new book or article that has to be read. But this time he had forgotten to bring something. I almost got crazy (laughter). He was like a little child. He couldn't sit still, he started to drum with his fingers on the dashboard, he sang, he talked like a maniac…I think he has to have a lot of things going on all the time, at work and at home. (Subordinate to Rikard)

Even if most of the subordinates were very pleased with Rikard, there was one subordinate who would have liked some things to be different:

Rikard is so involved in his own research. He's a very generous man when it comes to empowering people, but he isn't very good at seeing people. He has a leadership style that perhaps suites most people here well I think, but I feel a need to be seen. (Subordinate to Rikard)

When it comes to the management training, Rikard gave the impression of not having been particularly active in the choice of it. He argued that he had been manager for so long that "*he risked being sent to a management program*". He preferred to choose one rather than being sent to one, but still he was not very active in his search.

> *Possibly I wanted a management course. I have been a manager for nine years. Still I am a veterinarian by education and an autodidact with respect to management. However, I did not want to go by myself. Nobody wants to see the photographs from a vacation they did not attend, and I wanted to be able to share the experience with someone afterwards. Marianne said that she had found a program that seemed good, and then I and David decided to go as well. If she believed it was good it probably would be (laughter).*
> (Rikard, participating manager)

Rikard likes to work a lot and being involved in a lot of projects, but it seemed like he had driven himself a little too hard just before the management training started.

> *I think it was lucky that the program came when it did. Rikard was on his way to becoming burned out. The course made him stop and maybe by that he avoided running into the wall…this time.*
> (Subordinate to Rikard)

Rikard himself confirmed that he had almost used up all his energy before the course, but as usual he told it in his own way.

> *I think I almost got burned out, but I didn't have the time to do so (laughter).* (Rikard, participating manager)

When he went to the first course week, he wanted to be open for anything, so he tried hard to have no expectations at all.

During the program

Rikard felt that he had managed well with having no expectations about the first course, but he seemed to have neglected that returning to his daily life could be just as stressful as leaving for a course.

I was prepared for the unknown, but I was not prepared for the known. It was no problem going to the course knowing nothing, but returning to my daily life with three noisy teenagers and an immediate chaos on arrival was initially very painful. Therefore the return to work on Monday was an interesting challenge. However, I think I had managed to adapt to the usual situation by that time. (Rikard, participating manager)

Rikard's attempt to have no expectations during the first course week was clear for everyone at the course, but it was not totally appreciated by the leadership trainers. Rikard was perceived as "the problem student" during the beginning of the program.

He just repeated "no expectations, no expectations" like it was a mantra during the first course week. It felt like an escape more than anything else; an attempt not to take responsibility for his own participation in the course. We work a lot with the participants' personal visions during the first course week. We put a lot of effort in to having them create their own vision for their leadership, which we then return to several times during the program. But when we tried that with Rikard, we just met his mantra "no expectations". He was like a stubborn child. (Jivan, leadership trainer)

However, Rikard seemed to be rather satisfied with what he had achieved and he thought the program was very useful.

I have always been thinking a lot, so most of the subject matters that came up during the first week of the course were not new for me, but it was good to have the time and opportunity to reflect upon them. (Rikard, participating manager)

Rikard seemed to not totally buy the concept in the beginning, or at least he stayed reluctant, which gave the impression of him as a slow starter in the training both from leadership trainers and other participants.

I think Rikard didn't let the guard down fully until the third week. He was only there physically. But during the third week something changed, something must have happened or he might have experienced something extraordinary, because suddenly he started to show more interest in the program. (Peer and participating manager)

One part of the explanation could be an exercise that had a major impact on Rikard and made him reflect a lot upon himself.

We took part in a laughter meditation, where you were supposed to just sit and laugh. To laugh on command and without genuineness was not easy for me. Me, the guy who always jokes and laughs…and I think I am seen as always full of fun. I just couldn't laugh. Instead I got sad and depressed. I started to think about all the sad clowns. That experience has made me think a lot about my joking and laughing…and what's behind that. (Rikard, participating manager)

In the middle of the program Rikard understood that he might be a candidate for a promotion. He was very concerned about this and wanted to be prepared for it, but the question also reactivated an old question - should he continue as a manager or should he go back to being "just a veterinarian"?

I want to be ready if the question comes up. I prefer to choose strategy myself rather than letting the strategy of someone else grab hold of me. It is not that I need to have an answer ready, but I want to be prepared for the question. Still I don't want to start thinking about it now. That would be a waste of energy. Nevertheless this potential question has made me think about what is important for me. I am a veterinarian, and that is really what I love doing. Instead of climbing the ladder, getting more authority, but also more administration, I might go back to being a practicing veterinarian. Right now I don't know. (Rikard, participating manager)

Rikard felt that the program had its peak during the third week, but the last two weeks became opportunities to further explore and reflect upon the issues that had already come up.

After the program

When I met Rikard half a year after the training had ended, he still had the same position. The question of promotion had either not come or he had not let it come. During the summer in the months after the program had ended, Rikard had found a new interest. He had started to write short stories. When I met him in the middle of the autumn he talked about this project with great enthusiasm and told me that he would try to get a collection of short stories published. I was also able to read them and was

amazed by the quality. I tried to understand if this was a new career, a hobby, or something else.

I used to write a lot a long time ago, so it is basically an old interest that I have resumed. It is a hobby and nothing else, but like everything I do it has become very intense and a considerably bigger project than it was intended to be (laughter). (Rikard, participating manager)

He seemed to prefer to speak about his writing of short stories rather than his work. Still, when it came to his work he seemed to have come out of a period of doubts and he had come back to the organization with new energy after the summer.

As you know there are some people that have left their jobs after the program. I have heard some crap about all the people that participate in these kinds of programs thereafter leave their jobs because of the experiences made in the program. As far as I am concerned that is definitely not true! As I see it, these people would have left their jobs anyway, the only difference is that it happens a few years earlier because of the program. However, there is also another type of person. People that have hesitated about their situation, but after an analysis decide to stay and take the struggle. Trying to make something out of the situation. I think I have seen this behaviour in Christina [participating manager] *and* [a participating manager who is not in my study], *and I think I am heading in that direction.* (Rikard, participating manager)

Rikard also explains how he intends to "*stay and take the struggle*". He will probably apply for another position in the organization, from where he thinks he can influence things more.

That position could actually be the best location in the organization if I want to secure the survival of my present department. (Rikard, participating manager)

From an organizational scheme these two departments seem to be on the same level. For an outsider it is not self-evident that one position is better than the other, but Rikard explains why:

Take a look at the size of the budgets. The power is where the money is! The other department has a lot of state financing but it is also dependent on my present department due to its better

knowledge about the line of the business. They may not fully understand this fact. I have not yet told my employees about my thoughts, as I'm afraid that they might lose interest in things and think that I will abandon them. I have to make them understand that it is exactly the opposite. I do this for them and this department, but it's a delicate issue to make them understand that. (Rikard, participating manager)

After one of my interviews with one of Rikard's subordinates, Rikard was very concerned. He was worried that "*I might have got the wrong picture of him*". This comment was made although I had not mentioned the interview with her directly or indirectly. It seemed as if this relation was somewhat difficult for Rikard. However, in a later interview, half a year after the program he had another view of their relation and he saw that as one example of his changed leadership after the program.

[His subordinate] *and I we are not at all alike, but now I have understood that it is my responsibility as a manager to try to understand my subordinates, even the people that think in a different way than I do. I have maybe become better in giving people what they might need.* (Rikard, participating manager)

Otherwise, Rikard did not say much about a change in his person, but he noted that he had become more aware of his leadership now than before.

It's not so much that I have changed my leadership; rather I have become more aware of how I am managing people. I manage them very gently. I have the goal clear in my head, but instead of shouting it out to everybody, I give them small gentle pushes in the right direction, so they feel that they are making the choice and that it is their way and their goal. I work with academic people and the "typical approach" for an academic worker could be summarized as follows: "Tell me what to do, and I will prove that you are wrong", so you can't give direct orders. Therefore I think these gentle small pushes are the right way to manage people here, at least it is my way of managing people. (Rikard, participating manager)

His peers also noticed that he had started to reflect more upon management issues than before.

Rikard seems to have taken the program very seriously. Even if he seldom talks about the program itself, he has started to discuss

with me what he wants to do at his department... and it concerns managing the people at the department. I think the program has opened up fields for him, which are new... I don't think he had reflected that much upon his management before. (Peer to Rikard)

His subordinates can also see something. The subordinate who seemed to have a slightly problematic relation to Rikard when I met her a few months earlier was satisfied with the change she had seen.

He handles criticism better now. This is a change that has come successively during the program. Previously he got very defensive when he felt threatened in his role as manager, he could almost become aggressive. He handles these situations much better now, and listens to what you have to say. (Subordinate to Rikard)

She expounds on this change with a specific example regarding a situation she had experienced some weeks earlier.

A colleague and I had a suggestion about how we could make our department meetings better. He took this very well and after some small adjustments he decided that we should try this. I remember before this program... when you came to him with a suggestion you were attacked with a lot of questions from all possible aspects. I remember feeling like a hypothesis that should be rejected. This made me hesitant in approaching him with suggestions; it wasn't worth the effort, unless you were loaded to your teeth and coped with his attack. (Subordinate to Rikard)

Researchers test hypotheses; the example above indicates that managers who are researchers might continue that strategy also when managers.

Rikard seems to have moderated his joviality to some extent, which is especially appreciated among his peers.

One of the best things with the program is that I have got a new friend, who I value. Marianne and I were good friends already before, but I and Rikard didn't know each other that well. Nowadays we meet often and talk...and it feels good to have a peer to discuss problems at work with...and he's both perspicacious and profound...his clowning and his funny mask that tended to hide everything else before has almost disappeared. (Peer and participating manager)

Rikard was satisfied with the training, but he was a bit critical of how his superior management had handled it.

To be honest, I don't think they have any idea of what they send people to and what might be worse, I don't think they care. They care in the sense that they want something "good", but what is that? And how do they assure that it is good? (Rikard, participating manager)

6.2 Participants from Gamma and Delta

The organizational structure is rather fixed in both these IT consultancy firms. Both are divided into divisions. These are divided into departments, which are divided into groups. The group level is the lowest level where managers are appointed and have there own budget responsibility. The sizes of the groups are very different depending on the activities. Most of the groups are further divided into teams with team leaders and/or projects with project leaders. However, they have no formal appointment as managers. The two managers from Gamma and Delta who attended the program are both managers at group level.

6.2.1 Maria

Maria as a manager and a person

Maria has a university degree and works in a consultancy firm. She is a group manager with 15 subordinates. The organization is rather hierarchical with a fixed structure regarding different manager levels.

Maria divides her time between three main duties: being group manager, being in the management group at the department and being in a project group, which is concerned with bringing out the core values of the organization.

Group manager is the main part of my time...but to bring out the core values...working in the culture group... that is what gives me energy. It is only 10-15 % of my time, but I think it is important for me right now...the work as a group manager takes a lot of energy...the culture work inspires me...and it is what stimulates me now. I am a person who easily gets bored if nothing happens and I

feel that nothing could happen in my group manager job that I couldn't deal with in my sleep. (Maria, participating manager)

She describes her manager role a little like an "advanced secretary".

What I do is that I administrate and direct the work in a certain direction. I make way for my subordinates, because after all they are the ones that bring income, I am only a cost, so in that sense I am like an advanced secretary or a curling broomer...I create conditions for them to do a good job. I think I am seen as a soft leader...even if that might simply be the result of cunning...(laughter). (Maria, participating manager)

Before the program

Maria worked formerly at one of the largest firms in Sweden and she had participated in a lot of management courses, mainly internally organized by her former and her present employer, but also external courses. This time she wanted something different from previous management courses, something that was "softer" and more focused on her as a person.

I have participated in a number of management programs, but they have all been very formal and intellectual. What I found really interesting in this program was the focus on me as a person. I wanted something only for me. (Maria, participating manager)

Even if the focus is management training, Maria considered it to be an opportunity to find order in her private life too. Before the training, Maria had separated from her husband. She had also been on the sick list some weeks, so she entered the training in a rather shaky state.

My private life has been a roller-coaster the last months, so I felt rather vulnerable and inquiring when I registered for the course. I was seeking to find a balance between all elements of my life. I had no specific expectations, other than that I knew that I wanted a change, but I did not know what kind of change... the driving force is for a change in me as a person, if it is expressed at work or in my private life; that is not important to me. (Maria, participating manager)

Her manager was rather reluctant to finance the training, so Maria had to fight very hard to be able to go.

[Her manager] *thought that it was not a good idea to attend the training. I had to use all the holds I had on her to get the permission to go. I don't know why I met so much resistance. Perhaps the training scared her.* (Maria, participating manager)

<u>During the program</u>

The first course became a rather shocking experience. It became clear to Maria that this was something totally new for her and it was different from anything else she had experienced.

> *The first course was very confusing, not at all what I had expected. There were very strong emotions involved, I had never thought that I would stand there and cry in front of other people! My strongest emotions regarded my personal vision, when I realized that I was not the person that I want to be.* (Maria, participating manager)

According to the leadership trainers Maria was very close to leaving the training during the first week. She entered the program in a very shaky state and a lot of emotions burst out. The leadership trainers convinced her to stay and to continue the program.

> *A lot of things happened for her during the first week, she considered whether she should continue the program or not. She thought she got the "wrong effects" as a lot of personal stuff came up and this was a leadership program. I had a long talk with her, where I told her that leadership is something personal and that we have to start with ourselves. I convinced her that whatever comes up we can and are willing to help her to take care of that. Nothing is wrong.* (Jivan, leadership trainer)

Even if the course in itself was a shock, returning to her own organization became an even greater shock.

> *Returning after the first week was a shock! I had done a real spin during the week, and then I came back and everything was as it used to be… I mean, it felt unreal that so many things had happened to me, but the world around me hadn't changed.* (Maria, participating manager)

Maria experienced it like living in two different worlds with different orders. She preferred to live in the setting that the leadership program offered.

> *I missed the permissive atmosphere at the course when back at work. To sit there, totally open, talking about your most personal matters and you know that the others are not judging you. What a difference from being at work! I just wanted to go back to the course immediately!* (Maria, participating manager)

Returning to the organization after the course weeks continued to be a frustration to Maria. When she returned after the second week, she came with the intention of putting into practice what she had experienced during the course in her home organization, but it turned out that it was not that easy.

> *Returning after the second week... I felt like I was 18 years old with a new driving license. I was very self-confident and thought that I had learned a lot. I saw so many new things, and I wanted to help people to see what I saw, I couldn't leave it alone... but it became a total disaster. I felt like I had a lot of new tools, but I was not yet ready to handle them. I went away to the program to improve things, but I felt I was only making things worse.* (Maria, participating manager)

Maria tried very hard to act accordingly to what she had learned during the courses, but it proved to be very difficult to be the person she experienced she was during the courses.

> *I had a fight with* [her superior manager] *and she said: "But you are the angry one in our team". But I don't want to be, it became so clear during the course, I am not angry as a person, I don't know why I have got that role... but the most frustrating part is that it is so hard to get rid of it, they expect me to be angry and that becomes self-fulfilling.* (Maria, participating manager)

Maria's major source of frustration was her role in the management group, which she hoped the training would help her to deal with. When she tried to act differently there, she met heavy resistance.

> *Concerning my role in the managerial group... that was something I had hoped that the course would help me to sort out. They see me as sarcastic and with a sharp tongue, and I have become a very*

cussed woman in the group. During the course I felt very clearly that I was someone else. I am not the person that I am in the managerial group. But I don't seem to be able to express who I really am, instead I think it has become worse since I began this course... I am no longer flexible and smart... I feel an urge to say what I feel... and the others say "why are you going to these courses, they only make you strange!" (Maria, participating manager)

Maria felt very frustrated when she did not manage to express the person she experienced she "really was". In addition to the direct resistance from other people as in the example above, she also felt that she hindered herself.

- I get so frustrated when I don't manage to live out the person I have discovered that I am during the courses, but it's so hard when being at work. I think it is about being honest with yourself...to stop playing games only to get people to like you. It is such a strong impulse in me, to do anything to be popular... to be successful...to be in a certain way. We have learned a social pattern that hinders us from being honest with ourselves.
- What is it that hinders you from being yourself? (me)
- I don't know...I only do this, it comes automatically...it is these social patterns...but I guess it is about courage, to have the courage to take the risk of not being liked. (Maria, participating manager)

Maria is seen as "the young one" in the management group, which does not make it easier to change.

I strike as an underdog in the management group, but it will require a lot of courage to live out the person I have found that I am in this setting...the others are older and more experienced, big strong men with loud voices...it is hard to be brave there. (Maria, participating manager)

Maria's frustration became so strong that after returning home after the third week, she informed me that she wanted to drop out of my research project. She believed that things had become so difficult for her that she did not have the energy to be a part of that either. However, she promised that I could contact her again after she had finished the training. If she felt fine, I could interview her then.

From the leadership trainers and the other participants I heard that Maria had started to get order in her life. The third week she started to bring in leadership issues and to bring them together with her personal issues.

> *Maria came into the program in almost a crisis, but now she has come out of the crisis and has started to deal with leadership issues as well.* (Jivan, leadership trainer)

After the program

When I met Maria after the program, she had just returned from her holidays. She had been snowboarding in the Alps, but it turned out that it was not only a holiday; she had worked as a snowboard teacher.

> *I love snowboarding, so this has always been a dream for me. During the last course week we did an exercise where we should picture what we most of all would like to do. I sort of described this situation that I have been in now. The leadership trainers then asked us what prevented us from creating this situation, and I started to list everything that was preventing me. I got a question back: Is that really true? Just then, I thought it was a stupid question; of course I had a lot of things that prevented me from going away. When I came back I enrolled as a snowboard teacher mainly to prove that I couldn't go, because I hadn't the right education and so on. But to my big surprise they asked me when I could come. I organized things at work so that I could take a five-week vacation and then left. It was absolutely the best thing I have ever done. That is something I would never have done without the program.* (Maria, participating manager)

When I asked her how it felt to have realized her greatest dream, she described it rather as a beginning than as an end. The snowboarding had started a lot of questioning about her present occupation, or rather continued questioning that had started during the program.

> *From your question I guess that you think "ok, now she has done that and can go back to work again", but that is not how I feel. This is not an end, it is a beginning, this is what I want to do, I don't want to be a manager. My older sister has always been the role model of my life, and I have understood that I became a manager mainly because she was a manager. It was only because of expectations from the outside. Everybody supported that I should become a manager. Only now I realize that I have never wanted to*

be a manager myself. I have done things that other people have wanted me to do. (Maria, participating manager)

Maria did not feel guilty at all, despite the fact that her employer had paid for a program that had made her change department and had given her a lot of doubts regarding whether she would continue as a manager or not.

They have dealt with this very strangely. They have paid more than 70.000 SEK for my participation in the program. And that is only the direct cost. How much more would it be if you took into consideration that I have been away from work for five whole weeks to participate on the course? Despite this cost, no one has ever made an evaluation, not a single question: "What do you get from the program?" Isn't that strange? (Maria, participating manager)

Despite the doubts, Maria was returning to a new group manager position. She would change manager position within the company to a newly started department. Even if she thinks the new manager job is a step in the right direction, she is still filled with doubt.

I will have two or three times as many subordinates as before, so in a way this new job is the challenge I seek. Still I have these doubts considering whether I should be a manager at all... but I don't know, it might be a sort of emotional hangover from the snowboarding. There was a lot of excitement and pace... compared to that my job feels rather dull. (Maria, participating manager)

One year later she is still at the same position, but the doubts regarding being a manager are not totally gone.

I really enjoy it here. I feel that my competence is respected and that I am seen as an asset... Here there are fresh ideas, which I never saw at my former department. Still... I don't know about being a manager. I am rather fed up with the personnel responsibility, they are almost 40 people... so I don't have time for much else... but I enjoy strategic thinking, budget work and prognosis. We will divide my group in teams with team leaders who will take care of direct contact with the subordinates, so maybe that will improve the situation. Then I could lead through the team leaders. (Maria, participating manager)

With one and a half years distance from the program Maria seldom thinks about it, but she feels like another person now compared with before the program.

I feel that I am another person now compared with three years ago. I am calmer; independent of what happens around me... it doesn't really get to me. That is the positive side, but I am also more lonely... I no longer enjoy superficial contacts... and there are not that many you can meet on a deeper level. As a manager I feel that it's easier for me to have things my way. I have learned the strength of the low-key conviction... so in that sense I have become better at manipulating... (Maria, participating manager)

6.2.2 Christina

<u>Christina as a person and as a manager</u>

Christina is middle-aged and she has a background in the public medical service where she worked as a department manager. She came to Delta six years ago after having re-trained to become a system developer.

Her group is big in comparison with the normal size of groups in Delta. Today she has 60 subordinates including consultants, but during the IT-boom she had 90 at the most.

Christina describes herself as a manager as someone who gives her subordinates a lot of freedom. She is not that controlling.

I expect that my subordinates come to me voluntarily if they have problems. I should not have to ask...and so far it has worked fine. (Christina, participating manager)

Christina enjoys change and new things. She prefers to be a visionary in her job, which concretely has led to her group staying on the cutting edge when it comes to technology, something that is appreciated by many of her "technology-loving" subordinates. Christina's interest in new things has had direct implications for her department.

I have worked close to Christina for many years. In fact she was the one who employed me. We were about 10 persons then and we

have been around 90 people at the most including the consultants. This growth is mainly thanks to Christina's ability to attract new customers and her interest in continuous development. Probably that is the main reason why she attended this program as well. Some people just have to continue their development. I would say that Christina is very much like that. (Project leader subordinated to Christina)

However, the fast growth has a problematic side. Christina feels that she can no longer have a personal contact with all her subordinates. This is something she wants to improve in her leadership: the direct contact with her staff, especially regarding feedback.

The organization structure makes it impossible; I have too many subordinates to be able to give them feedback all the time. I am searching for a systematic way to do it, but so far I have not succeeded. The problem is that you have to be very formal. If I just say: "Well done", they tend not to see it as feedback. I have to say: "Now you are getting feedback", and then say "well done". Then they see it as feedback. This is rather problematic for me. I urge my team leaders to give feedback, so hopefully my subordinates get feedback from them. (Christina, participating manager)

Before the program

Christina had attended a lot of manager and leadership programs and courses before. She saw this program as a complement to her earlier experiences of programs, which she saw as more technique and method oriented.

I saw this program as an exciting complement to my earlier programs. It focused on a part of leadership that I hadn't handled before in training, this seemed focused on me as a person and what I could do as a leader. (Christina, participating manager)

Her choice seemed well considered. She had deliberately chosen a program that focused on what she considered as a gap in her previous manager and leadership training. She also had some previous experience of the organizers after having attended one of their short programs. This short program was her only previous experience of courses or programs in personal development.

Another factor for attending the program was that Christina felt that she was ready to take the next step in her career, but she was not sure to what or if it would be an internal or external job. She saw the program as an opportunity to get help to find herself and to find out what she wanted. She had started to get fed up with her present job; she did not think that there was anything new to learn there. Furthermore, work had been very hectic, so it felt good to get away in periods and to have some distance to it. That Christina works a lot is something that her subordinates noticed.

> *She works a lot, but that is natural when you are manager for over 60 people. But I think it would be good for her to work less... both for herself and considering that she is mother of a 9-year-old boy.* (Project leader subordinated to Christina)

Christina said that she did not expect great things from the program. She was a little sceptical, but curious.

During the program

The first course week came very much as a shock. Christina's neutral expectations were strongly challenged.

> *This was something completely different in comparison to the courses I had previously attended. I was surprised about the strong emotions in all participants. I mean you see successful career people in the middle of their careers, who totally lose control.* (Christina, participating manager)

Christina told me about how she herself had lost control during an exercise during the first course week. She was very surprised that it happened at all. She had not expected to lose control in that way.

> *The day before this we had done an exercise to find our personal vision. Mine was to rediscover the joy in my life and my work. I felt rather shaky when I got into bed that night and this feeling was still there when I woke up in the morning. We were supposed to do a role play that morning, but I just felt that I couldn't. I got very sad and couldn't stop crying, and I don't know why…the wish to find joy became too strong, and I couldn't find it.* (Christina, participating manager)

She said that she was sceptical before the program and she remained a little sceptical also during the course weeks. There were some activities and exercises she did not like at all.

I am one of the persons in the group that are a little skeptical to some parts. Meditation is a large part of the program and for me it is meaningless. It simply doesn't work for me; I cannot relax in that way...then they say that it's because I am consciously present or that I hinder myself... maybe that is right, maybe not... I don't really care, as I don't like meditation. There are also other exercises I find ridiculous and I often try to find logical explanations to things instead of the explanations we are offered. (Christina, participating manager)

Even if Christina was skeptical, her overall experience of the first course week was positive. The exercises regarding responsibility were very useful according to her. Her conclusion from the exercise was that it was not the responsibilities in themselves that were hard to deal with, rather the imbalance in her life that made some of the responsibilities difficult.

Some responsibilities are harder and some don't bother me at all, that is the way it is. What makes it hard is when you are stuck in the treadmill and do not have time even to look up. Then the responsibilities become hard. I have no problem with responsibilities, rather I must try to find a balance in my life and find the opportunity to relax and take a breath. I think that is the lasting insight from the first week. The workload lately has been extreme, and then it is impossible to find energy and joy. The course has helped me to find the root of my feeling of unease. And I have thought more about what I really want to do. (Christina, participating manager)

Despite this insight Christina continued to work a lot when coming back to her organization. She did not give herself time for reflection and did not think much about the course. Her extreme workload continued during the working weeks after the first course week, but just before the second course week the situation got better. The charm of novelty was already wearing off during the second week, but she did not find the course useless.

The experience was strongest in the beginning. Already in the second course week it wasn't new any longer. Still I felt that the

process progressed slowly all the time, to have time for reflection is really useful. (Christina, participating manager)

After the second course week Christina had a plan for what she would like to change in her current work situation. The insights from the first week had developed during the second week, and now she had more time to manifest her wishes and reflect upon her situation after having come back to the organization.

Most of my time I am occupied with operative, administrative activities, so I don't have enough time for strategic questions or for my subordinates. I hope that I can get a manager secretary, who could relieve the pressure on me. (Christina, participating manager)

During the third course week, they did an exercise regarding power. The participants all stood in a line and one of them was supposed to get all the others, one at a time, to step aside, by asking them to do that. The instructions were to find the inner power and presence in the moment, to get the others to move. The others were not supposed to move unless they felt the one who was asking was sincere.

The inner power exercise was very important to me. It is really quite a simple exercise, but it became very clear to me how different it is to meet someone, who is really present and wants something! When someone really spoke from his heart I could feel that I wanted to help that person by stepping aside; it felt meaningful to let him through. (Christina, participating manager)

Christina also found a way to implement this insight into her daily work and she could see what a difference it made when meeting people.

Now, when someone comes into my office, I try to be with them 100%. I always turn away from my computer and face them... and I stay that way as long as they are here. I put everything else aside. The difference is significant! The meeting feels more honest and conscious. It is easier to have a good conversation and I capture things better. This commitment makes me remember things better. Earlier, when I perhaps sat with my computer and had the conversation parallel with this, I had forgotten most of the conversation the day after. (Christina, participating manager)

After the third week Christina decided that it was time to realize some of the structural changes she had thought of earlier. She had understood that she had too many subordinates and that the size of the group was the root of the frustration she felt in her leadership situation. There had also been some wishes for a different structure from her subordinates and especially from the team and project leaders subordinate to her.

In fact this group is as big as a normal department. So in a way, Christina has already risen one level in the hierarchy, but without the sufficient structures. This affects her and it affects us, who are team leaders under her. A group manager has the responsibility for the staff, but that would be impossible for her considering that there are 60 employees in the group. Consequently, there has been a shift in responsibility, which has made us team leaders more responsible for our staff in the team, but without having the authority to do that. It doesn't feel good, but no one could blame Christina for that, rather it is her superior's responsibility to create an adequate structure. She has done what she can within these given frames. (Team leader subordinated to Christina)

The situation led to a joint decision to divide the group. One third of the group formed the core of a new group with a separate group manager. Now, Christina had more time and she made an effort to deal with the staff issue.

The impossible situation had forced me to choose between customers and staff, and I had chosen the customers. Now, when I had more time I really went ahead with the staff issue. I concentrated on giving feedback, which I had neglected because of the trying situation. (Christina, participating manager)

During the last course week Christina had an experience that became very important for her. The task was to create and lead a project of some kind, which the other participants actively should take part in. The challenge was to make them committed to the task.

I organized a little competition between the other nine participants. Afterwards I received feedback. For two of the participants the fact that it was a competition was really a trigger and it made them work hard. Most of the others also understood that it was a competition, even if it did not trigger them that much. But then there were two of them, who hadn't understood that it was a competition at all. It really made me think. I mean, regardless of

how clear you think your instructions are, there is always a risk of misunderstanding. This was a situation where I thought I had given a perfectly clear instruction, I had even written it on the whiteboard. I knew the people in front of me very well and it was in fact a rather simple task. Still, all of them didn't understand it…or at least not as I intended it to be understood. (Christina, participating manager)

The mentioned exercise made a great impression on Christina and she thought it gave her insights that she put in to practice in her daily work. However, she claimed it did not influence her actions that much, rather her attitudes and her acceptance of her subordinates, peers and superiors. Indirectly these attitudinal changes made a difference to her actions as well.

When I have said something and people don't follow my instructions, I can get really angry. This insight has made me understand that I as a manager have a responsibility to follow up instructions. Not to control people, but to see that they have understood what I meant. I have another example from our management group. There is an accounts manager in the group without IT experience. She sees her role very differently from how I see it. Gradually after having this insight, I have become better at dealing with this situation. We can still have very intense discussions, but we don't quarrel like before. We try to find consensus, instead of fighting each other's points of departure. (Christina, participating manager)

After the program

Just after the program Christina applied for a job as a department manager within her organization, thus one level higher in the hierarchy. However, another person was appointed and she then felt that her career path in the organization was blocked. She started to apply for jobs outside her organization.

Maybe that was a good thing. I wasn't sure anyway that I wanted to continue in my present organization. The number of suitable jobs is after all limited in one organization. Now, I could really specify what kind of job I wanted. (Christina, participating manager)

Very soon she found a new manager job in another firm within the company group. This manager job seemed to fit her very well according to what she had found out about herself during the program.

> *In my previous job, I had too much staff responsibility. It is not that I don't like that, but I want to do other things as well. Here I will have 8-12 subordinates instead of 60, which will give me more time for work on a strategic level and there will be an international dimension to this job as well. I have found out that I want to work with the "big picture", I am not that interested in details. Furthermore, for the first time in 7-8 years I have a manager, whose competence I respect. I think I can really learn something from him, which feels very stimulating. I am full of expectations!* (Christina, participating manager)

During the whole program Christina emphasized that the program was chosen with her future career in mind. The next step in her career meant that she left her organization, but did it also mean that she "climbed the ladder"?

> *This is definitely a natural step in her career. As I see it, she moves up one level, compared to what she had here. I think she has the perfect skills for that job. Her ability to handle customer relations and sales will be very useful.* (Team leader subordinate to Christina)

The most profound effect of the program according to Christina is that she has found a balance in her life that she did not have before.

> *I still work a lot and that is something that I enjoy. But I have realized that it is important that I plan my working life and my private life better. If I know I will have to work late two days this week I plan this with my husband and let him have the responsibility for our son these days. Before I just let things happen without any planning on my part. When I was working late I was trying to solve these things at the same time and it was never good. I constantly had a guilty conscience for neglecting either my family or my job. It's such a relief to have found the balance and still be able to do a good job.* (Christina, participating manager)

At the end of her own program Christina sent two of her subordinate leaders to a short program organized by the same institute. However, none of them found the program especially useful.

Well, I think I know why she sent us to the program and not the others. She probably thought that we needed it for specific reasons – it is difficult for me to keep a distance to my job and [project leader] *can be a little rough when dealing with other people. But I didn't think it was anything for me. Some things were interesting, but there was too much I could not relate to. I think* [project leader] *was more negative than I was. Christina seemed a little disappointed. I think she blamed us for not giving the training a fair chance.* (Team leader subordinate to Christina)

Christina confirmed that she had hoped that her subordinate leaders would gain from the program and that she was a little disappointed that they did not like it. She did not think that all of her subordinate leaders could benefit from the short program, but that it would be useful for these two.

6.3 Participants from Beta

Beta is one of the air force bases in Sweden. There are 950 employees and 300 conscripts at Beta. Most of the staff are involved with the core activities, transport and combat flying, but there is also conscript training.

As in any military organization there is a very strong hierarchy, but there has been a slow transformation to process thinking. Traditionally all personal have been employed at the wing, but as a consequence of a decision to divide the organization into core and support activities, process thinking has been more evident. Because of this transition period the organizational structure is rather complicated at the moment. There are two parallel structures, one process-orientated and one hierarchical. The manager positions and budget responsibilities are related to the hierarchical structure. Östen, who attended Existential Leadership, is manager in a group called organizational development, which is seen as a part of the core activities and in the hierarchical structure it is subordinate to the garrison unit.

Over and above the two parallel structures there are the military ranks, which still are of significance, even if many of the support activities are not military and a number of employees do not have a military background.

When the three of us became a group we discussed who among us should be the manager. Östen has the highest military rank. You could argue that this should not be of any importance in our role, but the fact is that it is significant. We live in an organization with strong traditions. (Subordinate to Östen)

The group Östen is manager of consists of three persons including himself. All of them have a military background and they work with similar tasks. Their role in the organization is almost as internal consultants. They organize activities within manager support, UGL[37], team building, dispute handling, competence development etc. It might be more accurate to call Östen's subordinates co-workers considering the way they work together. Östen's management work concerns mainly reporting and other administrative tasks for his group. The subordinates are relatively self-going.

[His subordinates] *are very mature people, with good self-knowledge. When we started to work together we went away for two days to get to know each other. During these two days we talked about almost everything, we really opened up to each other. I think this was the foundation of the very good atmosphere in the group. We work very closely and we try to live as we teach. We coach each other and work continually with feedback.* (Östen, participating manager)

The good atmosphere in the group is confirmed by both of his subordinates and according to them the base of it was their own designed "kick-off" when they became a group, which Östen referred to above. They then went to a summerhouse and stayed there for two days only to get to know each other.

6.3.1 Östen

<u>Östen as a person and as a manager</u>

Östen is middle-aged and has been in the air force all his working life, more than 30 years. For 20 years he was a fighter pilot, but he left that career 10 years ago. The reason was a serious incident.

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[37] UGL - Utveckling, Grupp, Ledare - stands for development, group, leader and is a well-known group development program in Sweden, with its origin in the military, but today widespread in both private and public organizations.

I almost collided with another plane and only survived because of luck. After that incident I got doubts and I spent less and less time in a fighter plane and since 10 years ago I don't do it at all. (Östen, participating manager)

This crisis made Östen start to study himself more and he started to take courses in personal development. He attended some very heavy programs in personal development and also went to therapy within the field of personal development. Even if Östen himself did not put the label crisis on this period, he seemed to have been in a phase of insecurity and he spent a lot of time "searching for himself". One of his present subordinates worked together with him during this period and thought of him as a bit strange then.

Today I perceive Östen as a very valuable colleague... he is not at all as he was then. Previously I pictured Östen as strange... a difficult person. And I think most of us around him did. The only thing he talked about was these strange courses and how good they were and that we all could gain by participating in them. But after seeing the result they had had on him I don't think anybody was tempted (laughter). He seemed very insecure. He spent a lot of time with us women and didn't seem to get along that well with the men in the department. (Subordinate to Östen)

During the transition period when he was phasing out his pilot career, he worked with administrative tasks and in the last four years he has been working at the department of staff development, which recently has changed name to organizational development.

It is not only a change of name; it is a change of direction. The activities have been solely focused on people. Now, the focus is on people, but with the underlying idea of developing the organization. Competence development, group dynamics and other activities should be done with the organization's need of development as a point of departure. (Östen's manager, two hierarchical levels up)

Before the program

Östen had met the leadership trainers at a trade fair concerning competence development four years earlier. His interest awoke as early as then, as it was very similar to the programs and courses in personal development he had earlier attended. However, he had just finished

another leadership course and was not able to attend a new one so soon. He talked about the program and another manager at his organization found it interesting and attended the program. Her good result probably made it easier for Östen to have his participation in the program financed a few years later.

> *When* [the other manager] *attended the program she went through a revolutionary transformation. She went from being a very difficult person, who was very square in her manner, to be a totally different person. Today she is an extraordinary manager. I don't think anyone expected such a revolutionary transformation.* (Subordinate to Östen)

At the time for the decision regarding Östen's participation in Existential Leadership [the other manager] was Östen's manager and decided that he could get it financed. If the decision had been taken at a level higher it might have been different.

> *If the decision had been mine I would have been doubtful. I don't think Östen needs more of these kinds of programs; he would gain more from something else I think.* (Östen's manager, two hierarchical levels up)

Östen was most interested in the program because of its personal development content. He thought of it as a continuation of on the path he had already begun.

> *After Mullingstorp*[38] *I felt it was time for another step. I wanted to go a year earlier, but then there was no money to do it. I wanted it* [Existential Leadership] *mainly for my personal development; I wanted to continue my development. The primary goal was to improve my self-confidence. The point of departure was me… as a person.* (Östen, participating manager)

During the program

Östen was the only one of the participating managers, who had a lot of experience of meditation of different kinds. However, he was surprised that meditation had such an important role in the program and he was also surprised of how advanced the meditation was that they did.

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[38] A well-known very intensive Swedish program in personal development

I hadn't thought so much about what the program might consist of, but I was very surprised that we did so advanced dynamic meditation. For me it was no big thing, I have done it before, but for the others it must have been strange. I didn't think you did such things in a leadership program. (Östen, participating manager)

He was very surprised that the other participants were able to handle the heavy meditation sessions so well, considering that it was the first time for them.

Some people have problems and won't participate, but I am surprised at how well it goes… all can participate on their level, so it doesn't really matter if you have meditated before or not. (Östen, participating manager)

During the first course week Östen experienced the exercises concerning his personal vision and responsibility the strongest. The personal vision he found was in line with what he initially said was his primary goal with the course, i.e. to be confident in every situation. The questions about responsibility were new for Östen and made an impression on him.

I think about it daily. I ask myself: Is this my responsibility? It has also influenced my attitude to my colleagues. I must first ask myself if it is my responsibility and then put the same question to them. I guess I haven't thought much about my management role before, as we work in the way we do. The responsibility exercise made me think differently about my leadership. (Östen, participating manager)

For Östen the personal development content was not as new or revolutionary as for the other participants. He went into the mood of previous programs in personal development.

I have participated in programs similar to this and in the beginning it was much the same. Some interesting stuff came up and as a whole it was a valuable opportunity to dig deeper into myself. I take these opportunities to "be in process" as I call it. It's a state when I don't want much contact with the surrounding world… I try only to go further in… often I stay "in process" a couple of weeks after a course like this. (Östen, participating manager)

When Östen summarized the first two course weeks, he meant that the main difference they had made was that he tended to reflect more on what

he did. To stop and reflect tended to give him a better understanding of his activities, and allowed him to make a better choice as to what to do. The consequence was that he did less himself, but perhaps not less for the organization.

> *This state of presence makes me slow down and think more of what I should do rather than how I should do things. When I am stressed I tend to just do things, to clear my conscience… I don't think so much of what I should do, I just start with the first thing in order to be doing something. In a state of presence I make a better choice as to what to do. I think this results in that I do less in a sense, but I don't do less for the organization as I do the right things, the things that make a difference.* (Östen, participating manager)

Even if Östen experienced that he had become more reflective, his subordinates did not see any big difference in him or his way of behaving at this time.

> *I cannot see any change. He talks a lot about the program, but I cannot see that it has affected him. I and [the other subordinate] have asked him; we have really tried to understand what is happening as we cannot see any difference, but we didn't get any wiser, we still don't see any difference.* (Subordinate to Östen)

As said previously, Östen did not experience the program as revolutionary, until the fourth week.

> *During the fourth week I had a total breakthrough; I have never had so much energy in all my life. We dealt with male/female and I felt I came in contact with my male power. I have never had that direct power earlier. I feel that I am totally different after that, and I get feedback from my environment that confirms that. I think this is only the beginning, I found something new and I am getting better and better at using it. The fourth week was a revolutionary development stage in my life!* (Östen, participating manager)

Here he tries to describe the feeling:

> *When I feel this energy, everything is easy, "just do it" is the sensation and also the effect of this state. I have so much energy and I get so many things done. It's easy because everything is so clear, there seems to be no confusion anywhere. Also, everything is fun, it's a constant ecstasy of joy.* (Östen, participating manager)

Östen found that this feeling occurred mainly when he was challenged and felt that he was able to meet this challenge.

> *I don't think it matters what kind of task it is, the important thing is that I stand up for myself; then I get this feeling. I meet a challenge and I manage to handle it…like when I am clear on where I stand, and I don't back down when being criticized.* (Östen, participating manager)

After the program

The revolutionary development stage that he experienced during the fourth course week seemed to last. A few months later he seemed to have integrated this into himself and into his actions, and his subordinates saw a big difference.

> *I think it was not until about three months after the program that I began to see a difference in him, but then it was a big difference and it seems to continue steadily in that direction. He is more distinct and clear with a much stronger self-confidence. He is straight-forward in his communication and he can be tough if need be.* (Subordinate to Östen)

Both subordinates experienced these effects after the program was completed. Östen's other subordinate believed that during the program Östen seemed too focused on the content of the program, but now he had integrated it into himself.

> *A process started after the program, or at least it became visible for us then, perhaps he had felt it earlier. During the program he was so focused on the content of the course he had just attended. When he came back from the week when they discussed coaching, then he didn't talk about anything but coaching. The same when they had discussed emotions… it was always the last areas they had dealt with that occupied him totally. After the whole program he seems to have integrated this into himself instead. Now, he never talks about the program, but it has started to show in his actions and his way of being. His self-confidence has radically changed. Now, he can be a really strong person, who stands up for what he believes in and expresses how he feels.* (Subordinate to Östen)

Östen was the only one of the six participating managers that had any previous experience of personal development. Several other participants and the leadership trainers even argued that maybe he had had too many courses in personal development. His totally different point of departure seemed to make his process different from the other participating managers'. One of the other participating managers expresses it like this:

Östen went the other way. He went from strange to normal, while we went from normal to strange (laughter). (Participating manager)

Östen is manager for two persons, and they work together as consultants in the organization. Before the program both of his subordinates believed that there was no leadership if you consider the term in a traditional way, as all three worked on an operational level with similar activities and were rather independent. Östen attended management meetings and represented the group in different situations, but his subordinates believed it did not make any big difference in their daily work. After the program they have seen that he has gained trust in the organization, which gives him and his group a stronger impact.

With his new-born self-confidence he is so clear about what he stands for. I can see that this has created a trust in him within the organization, which diffuses to our whole group. Gradually they have more and more trust in us, and also in our approaches and activities. (Subordinate to Östen)

6.4 In the long run – retrospective narratives

The six narratives that have been presented so far are the result of following six managers during their participation in introspective management training. The fieldwork that is the basis for the narratives was most intense during the 8 months the training lasted, but some follow-up interviews were performed after the training as well. As a complement, three managers that had participated in the same program some years before were interviewed to describe possible long-term experiences. The aim of this section is to provide three retrospective narratives regarding participation in the program.

6.4.1 Niklas

Niklas was one of the participants the first time Existential Leadership was organized, five years ago, in 1998. The program still consists of the

same parts as then and according to the leadership trainers there have been no major changes in the program since it started. The only difference is that they have become more experienced in leading the exercises.

When Niklas participated in the program he was technical director at a large consultancy firm. Since then he has changed jobs twice. First to a manager position at another big corporation and now for two years he has held the position of deputy managing director at a smaller technical organization.

Before the program

Niklas had participated in a lot of management programs. He felt that he had come as far as he could in courses regarding managerial administrative activities. His concern when entering the program was mainly for himself as a person.

> *It was a process I was in then, I felt that I wanted to develop myself as a person and as a leader, and I had attended all of the courses for the" administrative part", but I wanted something for myself at a deeper level.* (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

His organization had a lot of internal management and leadership training, but he managed to get his participation in Existential Leadership financed anyway.

> *At that time, I was lucky to be in a big organization, where they focused on the "soft parts" of management. It was okay to talk about leadership, despite the fact that we were a technology-oriented organization. Otherwise I think it would have been harder to get this kind of a program financed... I mean you could hardly see it as mainstream.* (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

During the program

Niklas had a lot of experience of management training, but no experience of courses in personal development. He experienced Existential Leadership as something totally new in comparison with previous experiences.

> *It was shocking! (laughter) I have gone through some psychotherapy; that is the closest I have been to this experience,*

but it was nothing like this. It contained nothing from regular management courses, I mean lectures on how you should act and so on. It focused directly on emotions. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Normally, intellectual capacity makes it easier to handle any training or education. However, Niklas did not think that his intellectual capacity had helped him through the program, rather the opposite.

What made me stumble sometimes was my intellect. To be a thinking, rational and analytical person is perhaps not ideal in this type of a program (laughter). (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

In between the exercises there was a lot of time for meditation and reflection. Niklas experienced this as the program worked on two levels, where the "free time" and the meditation sessions enabled you to create your own program focus.

The program works on two levels. Of course you have the sessions with the trainers, but then you also have the meditation sessions in between, where you can work with any subject, not necessarily the subject that the course management had planned. The meditation, especially Dynamics[39], became a tool for me to get rid of things that had been a burden to me, feelings that were stuck in my body. There were many opportunities for meditation in the program, which I could fill with what bothered me then. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Niklas described what he experienced as effects of the program as a development process, which might have been strongest in the beginning, but did not stop when the program was over.

The initial part of the program was the strongest; it was nearly a shock. I think it culminated in the third week, but my process didn't stop. My process was strongest during the first three weeks, then the pace of my development slowed down, but the development continued. The period after the program was more about integrating this into my life to get the full potential of it. Today, five years after the program, my pace of development isn't that fast I think, but I find myself on a considerably higher level than before, I

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[39] An active meditation with five phases that last one hour in total.

think I have been able to stay on that higher level that the program helped me to reach. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

He also mentioned what he experienced as more direct effects of the program, when he immediately "practiced what he had learned" in the program when returning to his organization. This story is an example of that:

I had an experience that was very strong on two levels, firstly during the course and then directly after the course when I put this in to practice in the organization. It was about letting go, which has been my largest issue during my work with myself. One of the other participants in the course pretended to be a colleague of mine, and she did it really well. Immediately when I came home I had a conversation with this colleague. The reason for our conflict was that I didn't think that he performed well and I had pushed and pushed to change him. Now I tried to let go of him. I said: "I won't push you anymore. I will help you as a personal coach. Otherwise it is totally up to you how and what you perform from now on." After a few days he handed in his notice and left the organization. I thought that was a good decision, he took the consequences of his new responsibility. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

The organization and the training are two different settings. For Niklas it became difficult to find counterparts to the close relationships he experienced during the training in his daily organization.

To find new things in yourself, like you do during the course, is painful in itself. Then when you leave the course you are shaken, frail and without protection and you return to a working environment that hasn't changed during the week... you feel vulnerable. But I also felt a yearning for those close relations I had experienced during the course, a longing to meet on that deeper level, which so few can when you are outside this environment. You want to recreate what you felt during the course in your daily environment as well. And it is frustrating to see how hard it is; it feels impossible to do that. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

The people around Niklas in the organization were mainly supportive during his participation in the program, in the sense that they cared about him. However, his superior manager was not sure if Niklas' changes were

exclusively positive and he became a little anxious about coming potential changes.

During the program I got positive feedback about letting go of a lot of things. They thought it was good. But after a while, my superior boss said: "You won't let go of too much, will you?" I think he was afraid that I would sit down under a cork oak somewhere and smell the flowers (laughter). (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

The program may mean an opportunity to deal with a lot of things in your life and learn a lot about yourself, but Niklas argues that it was not possible for him to deal with everything. He experienced it as if he became saturated; there was a limit for how much he could do at a time.

You integrate the parts into yourself that you are ready for, but you can't go deep into everything. I felt that there were some stones that I could have turned, but I turned so many anyway. Maybe I wasn't ready to do more? Consequently, in some parts of the program your experiences almost make you high, but during others you may wonder what the hell you are doing there. But that is natural. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

After the program

Niklas strongly claims that there had been a transformation in how he was as a person before and after the program, and he also claims that this transformation did last. The transformation he refers to related mainly the personal level, but he claims it also influenced his leadership style.

There was definitely a transformation. I was one person when I started the program and another when I finished it and it was an irreversible change. I have never experienced such lasting, permanent effects from a program. There was a change in my personality that was so extensive that it wasn't possible to go back to the old. When I went into the program I wanted to have a balance in my life. I had already a strong intellectual side, but I wanted to be able to use my softer sides better. I think that now I am able to express emotions, I can relate better to other people, I dare to use my intuition and I don't have to have control of everything, I can let go of things. I have dared to take risks on the personal level, before I was very cautious when it came to my own person. Earlier I was cocky, but it was actually only a way to deal with my own insecurity. Now I am less cocky outwards, I don't

have to be, as I have a deeply rooted self-reliance. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Niklas experienced that he changed as a person and thereby he changed as a manager as well. The program gave him a repertoire of alternative ways to act as a manager.

I have always been good at creating visions for an organization. As I was before the program I usually presented "my solution" and everybody were nodding in support... but nothing happened. After the program, we were involved in developing our business, and I had, as many times before, come up with a solution. But this time I put it aside and instead involved 40 people in the process of creating the vision. When all these people together had worked out a new strategy for us it was very similar to the solution I had put aside. The big and crucial difference was that this one was the result of a joint commitment and it had great support in the organization. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Two years after he had finished the program Niklas had an experience, which he saw as concrete evidence of permanent change in him as a person and a manager.

I got proof that something had changed when I went to the short variant of Ex two years afterwards. I did an exercise regarding responsibilities on both occasions. The first time there were many responsibilities that I didn't want, but the second time I had only those I wanted. I had consciously got rid of those responsibilities that I didn't want right after the first course. Obviously this had had a more lasting impact, as I have earlier always had a tendency to take on too much responsibility. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Going further with Niklas' experience it seems that there was a transformation that he experienced, which had lasted in the long run as well, but the transformation was not manifested in every situation, i.e. he did not change from one type of behaviour to another totally.

When I push and people don't change, I think I have always had a tendency to push even harder. This experience of letting go and seeing the effects of it was very strong, and it had made me try this more often. I still have this tendency to push others, but more and more often nowadays I back off and let go...just to see what

happens. Often that can change a conflict that you are stuck in. So...this is something that I have brought with me, but it's not that I manage to do this at all times, many times I push as I always have done. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

The big question for Niklas was not whether he had gone through a transformation or not, he was convinced that there had been a transformation. The question and challenge was instead how to deal with an environment that had not changed.

It was totally clear to me that there had been a transformation in me and five years later I think I could say that it has been irreversible. The question I had to deal with after the program was how I could feel good in this new situation. How should I be with colleagues and friends when I had transformed, when they in most cases were the same? This process was very tough for me. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

The focus of the training is on the manager as a person, it does not involve the organization directly. However, Niklas still felt a bit frustrated that the development he experienced personally did not diffuse to the organization to the extent he had wished.

During the program I was frustrated that I didn't have a larger organizational impact than I had. Afterwards I can see that I should have been satisfied that my transformation went on as it did, but I was so frustrated that it didn't diffuse in the pace I wanted, the ripples on the water weren't that big. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Even if he was very satisfied with the program, he does not think that it is "the standard solution" for every manager.

I have recommended two people around me to go to the short variant of Ex. Indirectly I might have influenced more people by informing HR about the program, but I think Ex will never be a mainstream program... very few are suited for it. (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

6.4.2 Ingemar

Ingemar has today a high managerial position in a big corporation. When he participated in Existential Leadership two years ago he was a manager in the same organizationa but at a lower level. In other words he has now received the job of his former manager. Today he is responsible for in total 400 persons, with four managers reporting directly to him.

<u>Before the program</u>

Ingemar had attended a lot of different management and leadership programs and courses, both external and internal. He had also experience of psychotherapy and personal development. Ingemar had recently before the program completed a difficult project where he had closed down a unit and he thought the program might help him to regain some energy after a hard and trying period.

> *It was a good opportunity to ask my manager, because of the project I had just completed. I said "I need refilling and I have found this". He looked at the folder from the program and didn't understand much about it, but he trusted me and that I would get something from the program, so he said yes.* (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

His manager had a rather passive attitude to the program. He was handing over the responsibility to Ingemar, who felt that he needed the program mainly for personal reasons. He mainly wished to regain his energy rather than to learn a lot of models of different kinds.

> *I think I was very close to exhaustion and depression before the program, even if I didn't realize it then, but I felt an urge to refill my energy.* (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

As he had previous experience of psychotherapy and personal development and had meditated regularly for many years, the training was not something revolutionary to him, but rather he felt like he was continuing on a path that he had walked for some time. His interest in personal development started with a personal crisis when he was about 20 years old.

> *The crisis made me seek help through psychotherapy. I felt really bad at that time; I was very troubled. Mainly it concerned my*

identity...my sexual identity. I understood that I was homosexual. I was brought up in a home where it was seen as something wrong, which made it very difficult for me. I got very depressed. Luckily, I found a very good therapist, who helped me through the situation. In the beginning of the psychotherapy my focus was to learn to live with the situation, but after a while these questions started to fascinate me. My father was a priest and I had believed in God...when God didn't work for me anymore, personal development became my substitute, my new model of explanation. It became a new way of approaching the world after I had rejected God. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

What foremost attracted him to these types of programs was that they were not so intellectual, i.e. it was different from what one meet in one's daily life.

I tend to look intellectually at most things. With these types of techniques you can't do that. For me it is a way to delude my mind to shut down. It is not that I want to be intellectual, but it has always been easy for me, it's the easy way out for me, comfortable and safe...while the emotional side has not been as easy for me. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

<u>During the program</u>

Ingemar's experiences from the first course week were strong. When such strong emotions occur it was important to him to feel that he was in good hands, and he felt safe and confident with the leadership trainers. Otherwise he would have left the program immediately. Already after the first week he felt uplifted and that he had regained some of his energy.

When Ingemar looks back on the program he finds it difficult to choose one week that was more important than another. However, there were individual exercises that were very strong, especially one concerning power struggles.

The strong emotions the power exercise evoked surprised me. There was a strong experience there, but it has also been of greatest significance to me afterwards when it comes to how I relate to people. My way of looking at relations changed. Now I don't have a lot of wishes about how people should be or what they should do, which makes all relations easier. I have realized that most wishes originate in me. My need to tell people what to do and

how to be is not as strong any more, and instead I have become better at saying what I want and what I need. The focus is on me instead of them. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Even if there were some really strong experiences during the program, Ingemar did not experience that the program had any immediate or revolutionary effects. Rather he described it as a process, which transformed his attitudes to things and his way of being, slowly. When he thinks back upon the program he has an idea why the process took time.

I don't think I could ignore the fact that I was in rather bad shape when I went into the program. I wasn't stable until a few months after the program had ended. I gave all that I could during the program, and I was badly knocked about sometimes. […] To change a thinking paradigm must take time. But I think that my attitude to the program made a difference. In a way you could have as much as you want and can bear, and I wanted a lot. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

The identity process seemed less strong for Ingemar than for many other participants. An explanation is perhaps that identity issues were not new to him. As mentioned previously, he managed to deal with a deep identity crisis when he was about 20 years old. He felt that he was rather stable in who he was already before the program, so his identity was never a big issue for him. However, during the exercises concerning masculine/feminine he came to terms with something in him.

The leadership trainers talked about being androgynous as something positive as they argued that it meant that you have both sides. I had always seen androgyny as if you had neither, and therefore fought desperately to keep my masculinity. This new attitude made me relax, and it solved a conflict that had been in me. It was positive for me, even if I can't say that it made any revolutionary changes. I was the same, but I felt better about it. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

During the program his organizational environment neither supported nor restrained his process. He noticed that some people were curious, but most of them did not pay any attention at all to it. His manager never asked anything at all about the program.

<u>After the program</u>

Ingemar experienced that the program started or continued a process, which then went on, but it was not until a few months after the program had ended that he perceived any big changes.

> *I think it happened a few months after the program. My feeling is that I climbed up one level and there I have stayed. I think my experiences matured then and I was more stable, I was ready to take the next step. This has not abated; I am stable on this level, and sooner or later I hope that I will be able to take another step.* (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

One year after the program he was offered his manager's job. Almost immediately on the new job he had to start a program of closing down some stations.

> *When I went into that job, I felt an energy that I have never had. Closing down the stations was a strain, but I stood firm despite the storm. I don't think I could have managed that before.* (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

He did not feel comfortable in the management structure that he had inherited, so he decided to change it and he was very pleased with the outcome.

> *I feel that I have a greater impact on the organization today. When I became manager here I inherited a management group of 15 persons. The structure made it impossible to have any real discussions, and also many of the managers that were sitting there were people I would never have chosen...I changed the structure to a management group with four managers excluding myself, and then I chose the people I wanted there. Now I have a management group that works very well. The structure enables good discussion; I can have contact with everyone. My impact on the organization works through the managers in the management group, as they have direct contact with the subordinates. Then I must have an organizational structure that enables real contact and discussion with the managers... you can't have that in a group of 15 people.* (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Ingemar does not think that his organizational environment can see any big difference in him. The changes he perceives mainly concern his

attitudes to different things as well as to life in general. He exemplifies these attitudinal changes:

The connecting thought is presence, to live in the present, which I got a lot of help with. I have always had a tendency to think about what I shall do tomorrow instead of focusing on what I am doing right now. To be here, right now, takes away the stress that used to hang over me all the time. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Another attitudinal change concerns understanding. Ingemar thinks that he has an intellectual understanding of some things that happened, but for other things he has not. The attitudinal change concerns his attitude to understanding.

Previously, understanding has been a very strong driving force for me. I wanted to understand who I am and relate that to other people; to understand what I do and why. The program has given me a new attitude, it is not so much about analyzing in order to understand, rather it is about making it conscious and accepting it. This is a new way to tackle things; I don't analyze and dissect so much, I just make it conscious. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

These attitudinal changes could seem rather vague, but Ingemar claims that they have concrete effects on his leadership. They make him both more distinct in his leadership and make him feel better doing it.

It makes it easier for me to make decisions, and above all to stand up for what I choose, which gives me a greater impact. I get less depressed by making hard decisions. There are so many things that tear on you as a manager, and I feel I have a better attitude to that now, which makes me feel better when I go home for the day. (Ingemar, participating manager, 2 years ago)

6.4.3 Kerstin

Kerstin is middle-aged and a veterinarian by education. She attended the program 2000 – 2001 when she was a manager at a public organization. She left that job two years ago and is today managing director at a small company that import and distribute medicine-technical equipment.

<u>Before the program</u>

Kerstin landed in Existential Leadership by coincidence, but it was a result of her search for good leadership programs for the managers in her organization. She was central manager in her organization and had planned to send all the managers there to UGL[40]. As it was a major financial decision to send all managers to UGL, Kerstin wanted to test it herself first to make sure that it was worth the money. She attended UGL during autumn 1999 and she found it very useful. By coincidence the organizer of her UGL-group and the organizers from Sky Institute met and decided to do a joint course. In the first trial of such a merge the organizers used a group that had attended UGL and a group that had attended one of Sky's short courses. Kerstin was in this trial group on the basis of her UGL background and she found the course very useful. The positive experience made her and her staff manager attend Existential Leadership. Kerstin had no previous experience of courses in personal development, and if she had not gradually drifted into the program she does not think that it would have happened at all.

> *In a way I just landed there in the program. Personal development had never interested me before, if anyone would have asked me I would probably have sniffed at it.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Kerstin was not looking for a program for herself, but for a program for the managers in her organization. The purpose was to give the organization something that it needed. The interest for UGL, which then led to Existential Leadership, was based on the fact that she knew that most of the managers in her organization had become managers because of their expert skills. The best operational staff became managers and they had very little experience of leadership. She wanted to give them tools that helped them in their leadership.

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[40] A program developed by the military originally, but today it is employed both in the public and the private sector. UGL stands for Task, Group, Leader and handles mainly group dynamics.

<u>During the program</u>

When she began Existential Leadership she had first attended the joint course of UGL and Sky, which became her first experience of personal development. She thinks that started a process that continued during Existential Leadership.

> *The biggest experience was during the embryo course before Ex... that started the process. Ex then became repetition and intensification, but the revolutionary feeling came from the embryo course, then something opened up in me.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

She described the program as a development process, which in its turn consisted of several processes, a few with a clear start, but most just evolved. In general she described the overall process as a starting point to finding herself.

> *I don't really know what happened, but afterwards I can say that it was the starting point to finding how I really was, beyond everything that I do and have around me. I could support and see myself and did not need to be confirmed by people around me.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Her strongest experience during the program was an exercise concerning responsibilities. However, even if the experience was strong during the course, the long term effects were far bigger than she realized at the time. They gave her a new attitude towards herself.

> *We wrote down all our responsibilities and then we removed them one by one. In the middle of the exercise when I sat there and had removed all my responsibilities, and especially those concerning my job, I remember thinking: But who am I without these responsibilities? Then I don't exist? Who sees me now? I think this was the bottom line; I realized that everything except what was really me was perishable. I had to start to like myself; I had to think that I was OK. The more I think about it, the more I realize how deep this experience was. I maybe didn't understand it fully then, but it has made a lasting impression.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

The purpose of the exercise with responsibilities is also to identify which responsibilities that you have that you want to get rid off, and then to put this into practice. Even if Kerstin tried to do this as well, her lasting impression of the exercise was the fundamentally new attitude to herself rather than a concrete disclaim of responsibilities.

> *I tried to put away some responsibilities, but there is always a limit to what you can say no to as a manager and there is a limit to what you can delegate. Anyway I think I got a little better at that, but the big thing was my insight about myself.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Another area that Kerstin found made a difference to her was the coaching technique, which was handled during the programs. However, she found that it was mainly a technique that made her feel better in the situation.

> *I have become better at listening, without taking things personally. The coaching exercises made me better at just listening, more as an onlooker than as a member of a conversation. Now I can listen without caring too much or getting too personal, which makes it easier for me, but I don't know if it makes it better for them.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

After the program

During the time after the program, the situation at her place of work became more and more difficult and it ended up with Kerstin leaving the organization. However, she did not see this as a failure, and she thinks the program made her finish her job in a better way than she would have done otherwise.

> *My job got worse and worse. The program had helped me to say no to things, and it ended up with me handing in my notice. I cannot say what is the cause and what is the effect here, I might have quit anyway...but what I think is that I would have done it in another way; I would have left in anger or I would have fled. Now I was there, in the middle of the process, and I stayed until it ended...and it felt good.* (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Her new job is very different from her old one. Now she is the managing director in a private profit-driven organization with less than ten

employees. Before she was in a very large organization, which was public funded and bureaucratic.

If I were to convert all my course hours into being a better leader, then perhaps this job is not a good example. Here people leave the organization one after the other (laughter)...but I think it says more about them than about me. They had worked here in peace and quiet, and suddenly there was a manager who demanded something from them... it did not suit everybody. You can meet immature people everywhere; the important thing is that I don't take it personally any more. (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Kerstin has no urgent feeling that she has to attend a course or program again. Right now she is satisfied.

After the program I continued to meditate for a while, but it sort of faded away. My development continues while I go on in life, I don't want another course. It was very good, but I don't want to have a handrail in my life. I have seen people that can't live without their courses. I am not at all like that; I gladly attend courses, but I only take in what is good, they never capture me. I don't want to be an addict. (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Reflecting upon the program

When Kerstin reflects upon the program she finds that questions about her identity was one important influence from the program. She argues that the program helped her to redefine herself without paying so much attention to what other people thought and said.

I have always been told how I am. It became a rucksack that I couldn't get rid off. During the program I was told different things compared to what I had heard before, and that was interesting, because it made me begin to find myself among all the things that people "put in my rucksack". I understood that I had a choice; I didn't have to believe everything that people said about me. This made me pay less and less attention to what people said about me when I tried to figure out who I was. Before the program I could describe myself from what I heard from people, so it became self-fulfilling. So if you had asked me who I was before the program I would probably have described myself in considerably rougher words, as I always have heard that I am mean. Now my description

would be more nuanced. I know that I can still be tough, but I don't put a negative etiquette on it any longer. (Kerstin, participating manager, 2 years ago)

Organizational diffusion

Kerstin entered the program with an organizational goal. She was there to evaluate it before she sent the other managers in the organization there. Kerstin's participation in UGL and Existential Leadership became the start, and then all managers participated in UGL and some managers participated in short variants of Existential Leadership. To let all managers attend UGL had a large organizational impact according to Kerstin, but it took a few years before it started to show. She saw the management group develop from individuals who did everything to keep up appearances, to a group that took responsibility as a group. When it comes to the short variant of Existential Leadership, Kerstin thinks the influences were more individual. It was useful to some managers as it gave them alternative attitudes to their manager role, but for others it meant nothing.

6.5 Summary – What happened?

The six managers' participation in the program generated six very different stories, even for the managers with similar managerial situations.

6.5.1 Marianne – Renouncing previous roles

Marianne was considered as "the angry one" by her managers and her peers, but she was very popular among her subordinates. She was known for being very tough and a bit square in her manner, but also very intelligent and capable as manager.

Her acquired self-knowledge meant that she, according to herself, understood that she would not die if something were not 100 % correct. She became softer in meetings and started to "care less" about what other people were doing. However, despite the fact that several managers claimed that they wished that she would become softer, they seemed to miss "the angry one".

These expectations on her, as well as the structure that prevented her from having an influence, became so frustrating that she ended up leaving her old organization a few months after finishing the program. But she did not only leave her organization, her new occupation was as a specialist and not as a manager.

6.5.2 David – Stress releaser

David went to this program as he thought he "wanted to learn what leadership was", but what he thought was "an ordinary" leadership program turned out to be something completely different. He did not consider himself as "being the type" that went to such "soft training", but he decided that it would not hurt to give it a try. He became more self-confident in his manager role and started to shape his management more consciously.

The low pace of the program was disturbing to him in the beginning. However, after the program had finished he seemed to have been able to integrate this relaxation in his daily managerial life and he describe himself as less stressed, even if he had just as much to do as before.

6.5.3 Rikard – Living it out in another arena

Rikard did not make a very active choice when deciding to attend the training. He wanted a management program and thought this could be as good as anything else. For long the other participants and the leadership trainers considered him as a "slow starter", and he seemed rather uninterested in the program. Rikard was very popular among his peers and managers and they did not understand why he went to management training focusing on personal development – "he was already nice".

However, after half the program he started to analyze himself and his situation. When he started to question who he was, he found out that his occupational identity was much closer to his profession as a veterinarian than as a manager.

This questioning made him doubt if he should stay on in his manager job or "go back" to just being a veterinarian again, but after a summer vacation he decided to stay and try to make the best of the situation. His questioning and reflection had taken other directions during the summer. He had started to write short stories.

6.5.4 Maria – Identity redefinition with resistance

Maria was very frustrated with both her managerial situation and her private life when she came to the program. As early as in the first course week, her process started at full speed and it continued to be a very emotional and tough process for her during the whole program. The first week was very emotional for her, as she experienced that she understood who she really was, and that the role she played as manager was very far from this.

After the second course week she was very frustrated after having returned to her organization. She thought that she had discovered who she really was and tried to act on it, but she experienced a heavy resistance from her environment, which made her redefinition of herself more difficult. It became clear to her that she was not the only one defining her identity. Maria experienced the courses and her organization as two different worlds and her frustration became very strong when she time after time failed in integrating these two worlds. She felt that the outer pressure was very hard to resist, which prevented her from giving full expression to her new identity.

Her working situation became impossible and a few months after the program had finished she took five weeks off from her managerial position and her organization for a completely different occupation. She went snowboarding.

She experienced the snowboarding as living out one of her biggest dreams, but she also became very doubtful regarding her future as a manager.

6.5.5 Christina – A career step

Christina had carefully chosen this program. She had a lot of previous experience from other types of management and leadership programs and courses.

During the program she got more and more frustrated over her current managerial situation. She thought that she had learned what she could learn in her present job and it was time for the next step in her career. She used the time for reflection to analyze her managerial situation rather than herself. She had ideas of how to improve her department, but the rigid formal structure made it impossible to complete planned changes and her

career path within the organization seemed blocked. A couple of months after the program she left for another manager job in another organization.

6.5.6 Östen – From "professional life-seeker" to manager

Östen was the only one of the managers who had an extensive previous experience of programs in personal development. He could be considered a course addict and in his own organization he was perceived as "a bit strange" with a lack of self-confidence. The other participants in the program thought that he was tiresome and was an endless source of irritation. However, during the fourth course week he experienced what he considered a revolutionary development. He described it as a breakthrough in his life, which gave him confidence and strength in his manager role.

Östen's experienced change was soon confirmed by all of the other participants in the program, who very much welcomed the change. A few months after the program Östen's subordinates also saw a big difference. They found that Östen's new-born self-confidence and clarity created a trust in him within the organization, which diffused to the whole group. As the group work as internal consultants in the organization it became easier for them to have an impact within the organization.

7. IDENTITY WORK

The six managers' participation in the training generated six very different stories, and it seemed that their life stories had a great influence on how they perceived the training and how it influenced them. All of them experienced some form of transformation or change, but these transformations were all different in content, extent and visibility for others. The following chapters, 7 – 9, will describe their experiences with support from the theoretical framework and the problem development chapter, in an attempt to enable a deeper understanding of the influences they experienced.

Introspective management training is mainly manifested in an identity quest, which might create radical redefinitions of the self. Furthermore, the identity process that people do not normally reflect upon is suddenly consciously elaborated as something in itself, not as something contextually dealt with passively or subconsciously. Otherwise the identity process is something that is perceived more or less as "just being there", like context (March, 1994). The name of the chapter - identity work - comes from the notion that it is identity *work*; often hard, emotional and frightening work.

7.1 Conceptualizing of the self

7.1.1 The pre-existing process

No one is born manager and children do not dream about becoming managers (Watson & Harris, 1999), they dream about being fire fighters, pilots etc. Manager is something you become later in life. The spontaneous interpretation would be that you are appointed manager, i.e. a role is more or less imposed on you, and over time you become more or less *identified* with the role. If you perceive it as an important part of your self the *role identity* (Ashforth, 2001) connected to the role "manager" will be a central part of your identity (March, 1994). However, Watson & Harris (1999) noticed that the process does not need to be "role-gives-identity", it could also be the other way around. They noticed that some managers described that they had always *been managing* and then eventually they were appointed managers. There is an ongoing interaction between roles and identity, it is not a straight-forward process. Independently of which direction the process has, role identity is the connection between role and identity. All the participants in this study are

managers, which means that they are role occupants of a managerial role, but to what extent they identify themselves as managers is not self-evident. To understand the influence of the training I find it appropriate to understand their identity processes before training and especially regarding the extent to which they identified themselves as managers.

Only two of six managers seemed to be heavily identified with their managerial roles, i.e. their managerial role identities were important parts of their identities. These two managers were Christina and Maria, who both had manager positions at big IT consultancy firms. They were the only ones that clearly (and mainly) described themselves as managers. What made them different from the others was that they had an extensive experience of management training of different kinds. Management training is one of the numerous representations of management discourse. Different representations of management discourse serve as discursive resources that help managers to make sense of themselves and their actions (Watson & Bargiela-Chiappini, 1998). Being part of management discourse made it easier for Christina and Maria to identify themselves as managers.

The other four managers did not see themselves mainly as managers. The three managers who were veterinarians - Marianne, David and Rikard - saw themselves mainly as veterinarians. They had no previous direct contact with management discourse and this was their first management training. Instead they were heavily rooted in the professional discourse and the profession culture of veterinarians. When I first met them and asked them to say something about themselves, all three of them began with "*My name is X.X and I am veterinarian*". Being a manager was something that came much later in their accounts of themselves and with much less energy. It seemed far from being as deeply rooted in their identity as being a veterinarian. The connection to their profession seemed rooted in the long training of becoming a veterinarian. One of them expressed it in the following way: "*I trained to become a veterinarian. I didn't train to become a manager*".

Neither did the sixth manager, Östen, seem to be strongly identified with his managerial role. Instead he identified with "the other side" of the introspective management training – personal development. None of the five managers discussed so far had any previous experience of personal development. Östen on the other hand had extensive experience of courses and programs in personal development. Personal development seemed, in excess of being his main interest, to be an important part of how he defined himself. When he was "*in process*", as he described the

state of analysing himself, he felt "home". Being a manager was not as important to him as being a "personal developer". He had had some impact from management discourse, but the importance of personal development in his life however made its impact on his self-definition limited.

Management discourse is not the only resource in helping you to define yourself as a manager. There is also a practice connected to managerial work. The managers at the consultancy firms, Christina and Maria, had further support in their self-definition as managers from the fact that their daily work could easily be described in similar terms as discussed in chapter 2.2 regarding managerial work (Carlsson, 1951; Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1982; Jönsson, 2001; Tengblad, 2002). They spent most of their time in meetings, interacting with subordinates and other managers. The three veterinarians, Marianne, David and Rikard, on the other hand, were operational as well as managers. Considering their operational work as veterinarians their working days had not the same character as previous mentioned research on managerial work. Managers do normally work through others, thereby they are described as working by words (Jönsson, 2001), but that was not the case for the veterinarians. The manager at Beta, Östen, worked almost as an internal consultant in his organization, with projects relating to, for example competence development and group development. Thereby, his daily work was more operational than managerial. It seems as if the extent to which daily work consists of "managerial work" influences the extent to which managers identify as managers.

The characteristics of the leadership situation the manager is a part of influences the characteristics of the manager's work (and vice versa - it is an ongoing interaction). The managers at the consultancy firms were a part of hierarchical organizations with clearly defined hierarchical levels and positions, so their leadership situations were clearly defined when it came to the manager – subordinates relation. Thereby the managers to a greater extent were *approached* as managers during the day. The managers at Alpha had less clear leadership situations. Their relations to at least some subordinates (mainly the other veterinarians) had more the characteristics of peers than manager - subordinate. The interaction was furthermore not as frequent or intense, but each person worked rather independently. Finally, at the organizational development department at Beta, Östen and his subordinates all worked with basically the same operational issues, so the relation had the same characteristics as for the managers at Alpha, that of peers than manager - subordinates. The characteristic of the leadership situation influences to what extent the

manager is being *approached* as manager and furthermore how frequent the interaction between manager and subordinate is. To be frequently approached as manager seems to support the managerial identity.

Symbolic interactionists (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969) emphasize the importance of interaction in the shaping of the self and thereby identity construction. To perceive oneself as a part of management discourse could be described as the "generalized other" (Mead, 1934/1975) represents management discourse. Thereby, the conversation with oneself through the generalized other is similar to a conversation with management discourse. Management discourse thereby becomes a part of the shaping and conceptualising of the self. The leadership situation serves as the basis for the manager's direct interaction "here-and-now", which complements the indirect interaction with the generalized other, which goes beyond "here-and-now". The characteristics of the leadership situation influence to what extent the managerial work consists of interaction with subordinates and other people in the organization. Consequently, the characteristics of the leadership situation and managerial work influence to what extent the manager is being approached as manager in the daily work. To be seen and approached as manager seems to strengthen the role identity as manager.

It seems as if being appointed manager is no guarantee for making the managerial role an important part of the identity, since there are appointed managers for whom being a manager is not a central part of their identity. However, the situational characteristics influence to what extent managers integrate the managerial identity as a central conceptualising of themselves. Perceiving themselves as parts of management discourse provides discursive resources enabling identifying as manager. Furthermore, the characteristics of the leadership situation and the characteristics of the managers' work influence to what extent the managers are being approached as managers and how frequent daily interaction is. To often be approached as manager and to a large extent be involved with "managerial work" during the day strengthens the managerial identity.

7.1.2 The influence of the training

According to the leadership trainers introspective management training is not about learning in a traditional sense, rather it is about a new attitude to oneself as a manager through self-reflection and meditation. Self-reflection is basically an identity process as identity is described as the

170

narrative answer to the self-reflexive question: Who am I?, i.e. a conceptualizing of the self (Albert, 1998; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). As stated previously, identity is an ongoing process and consequently introspective management training influences a process that already exists. The managers' identity processes before the training were briefly described in the previous chapter. This chapter will focus on the influence of the training on these identity processes.

The six managers entered the training with different goals, which influenced to what extent the training had an influence on their conceptualising of themselves. Three of the managers, the three women, had a rather clear vision regarding what they wanted from the program, while the three men were more vague in what they wanted. The three women seemed to be there mainly because they sought change in different ways. Maria was most clear about this. She seemed more certain that she wanted a change *from* how she was herself and thereby how things were at work rather than a change *to* something special. Marianne's wishes for change were not so directly related to herself as a person, but she wanted the training to help her relate more easily to other people and thereby make her job as a manager easier. In the terms of pull or push, Maria's and Marianne's aspiration for change could be labeled as pull – they wanted the change themselves. However, in Marianne's case there was also a push. Some of her peers expressed that they wanted her to change. Even if Marianne never mentioned this as a reason for attending the training, it might have affected her choice. These wishes for her to change were expressed directly and indirectly and were definitely a part of the social pressure put on her to be in a certain way. The choice of this particular training might partly have been a response to that. Christina did not look for a change in her person. Instead her participation in the training mainly regarded her future career and her present manager situation. She wanted help to find out about her next career step and to find better structures in her present job. The change she wanted regarded her position rather than her person. Even if all three searched for change through participating in the training, the aspired changes were different in content – one of them searched for a change in her self, one for a change in her relations to others and one for a change in her position.

The three men had less clear goals with their participation in the training. The two veterinarians were there because they "wanted to learn about management"; they were hardly there with a change in themselves as individuals as a goal. For them, the training was mainly management training. The manager from Beta was there to continue his greatest hobby – personal development and to dig deeper in himself – but that was

mainly from a general interest rather than that he wanted a change. However, he also expressed a wish for a change in himself as a person, as he wanted to improve his self-confidence.

The different approaches to the training manifested in different processes for the participating managers. As stated previously, the leadership trainers stated that the training meant a new attitude to oneself as a manager through self-reflection and meditation. I see it rather as a provider of an alternative identity (see further elaboration in chapter 7.3.2) – an alternative conceptualizing of the self. However, the rhetoric of the training of finding "*who you really are*" means that it is not presented as complementary to the identity (-ies) you have already established, but as a substitute for your present established identity (-ies). Consequently, the extent to which you are willing to "give up" your present identity in favour of the offered new identity is likely to influence the extent to which the training influences the present identity processes.

Accordingly, the managers who came to the training with a wish for change had emotionally stronger experiences in the beginning of the training. It was most evident for Maria, who entered the training with the following expectations:

> *I had no specific expectations, other than that I knew that I wanted a change, but I did not know what kind of change... the driving force is a change in me as a person.* (Maria, participating manager)

Consequently, Maria had no doubts about "giving up" her old identity in favour of the new identity offered through the training and she tried to live out the identity (ex-) change in her home organization. However, it then became clear to her that identities are *relational* (Gergen, 1991) and that the "new identity" she established during the course was not that easy to live out in her organization.

Another of the managers, Östen, who immediately adopted the identity that the training provided, but the difference was that for him it was not a new identity. Rather the personal development discourse provided the identity that he felt most identified with, so he felt almost more at home on the course than in his organization.

The other participants adopted more of a "wait-and-see" strategy and did not immediately embrace the provided new identity, but for most of them self-reflection meant questioning a lot of the things in their lives (self, family, job, work situation, organization etc).

The four "more reluctant" managers' self-reflection had a different focus. However, for the three veterinarians there was a common factor. All three of them soon realized that above all else they were veterinarians and in different ways they started to question whether they should continue as managers or not. To be a veterinarian was a way to define oneself, while manager was a role they did not feel they identified with.

Rikard and David had no real plan when they entered the training except that they "*wanted to learn about management*". Consequently, at the beginning of the training they were neither prepared for nor willing to change as people. Especially Rikard was for a long time considered as a "slow starter", both by the leadership trainers and the other participants. The rhetoric of the training is to find out who you really are behind all the roles and social identities. Thus, indirectly the training encourages the participants to separate from their managerial roles, their roles as veterinarians etc, as these are a part of a social identity. However, as Ashforth (1998) points out there must be something that makes the "new" identity preferable to the present. Why should you otherwise try to change? Both Rikard and David were obviously very popular in their work place. They were popular among managers, peers and subordinates and especially Rikard had a very successful career as a researcher. Consequently, both of them had a lot to lose, by separating from their present social identity, and they did not seem to see anything in the new, offered identity that was good enough to encourage them to leave their "old identities". For Rikard it made him go through almost half the training before his process "really" seemed to start.

Marianne was at the training with a clearer goal than the other two veterinarians. She wanted change, but not regarding her veterinarian identity. She did not doubt if she should continue as a manager so openly, but it was clear that her priority was being a veterinarian. She started to define for herself what it was in to be a manager that was important to her. She had a strong organizational commitment and she strongly identified with Alpha. The main reason for her to be a manager seemed to be that it gave her an opportunity to influence her organization. Thus, being a manager was a way to influence upwards in the hierarchy rather than downwards. She had no interest in the position as such, rather she felt uncomfortable in the role as "directing manager" to her subordinates. She seemed more identified with her organization than with being a manager. Being an organizational member in Alpha seemed to be an important part of her social identity. Moreover she experienced a minor identity crisis in relation to her organization, when she experienced that

present decisions and activities in the organization were not totally in line with how she defined her organization. Being a manager seemed mainly to be a means of influencing the organization to make it consistent with how she experienced the organizational identity.

The fourth "reluctant participant", Christina, attended the training to develop her leadership rather than to go through a personal change. Her choice seemed well considered. She had chosen a type of training that she had not attended before. In that sense her choice was more professional than personal. Still it had personal aspects too as she had her own career in mind, otherwise her interest was organizational to a larger extent compared to the other participants. Her self-reflection was directed at her leadership situation rather than at herself as a person.

It seems like the managers' personal life stories are more influential than the leadership situations on how the training is perceived. The managers pretty much decided themselves what to reflect on during the training. Maria and Christina came from similar organizations and had also similar leadership situations, but they went into the training with very different goals. Maria said that she needed something for herself, which might bring order to her life and Christina viewed the training as a possibility to explore one part of management she had not worked with before. Despite the similar leadership situations, their processes became very different as their focus of reflection became different. Maria who attended the program for mainly personal reasons, i.e. her own personal development was in focus, reflected mainly on herself. She seemed to have a "tougher", more emotional process during and after the training, which resulted in a considerable redefinition of herself. Christina attended the training with more of an organizational focus, i.e. a more strict leadership development focus in mind. She seemed to reflect more on her leadership situation and mainly the organizational structure rather than on herself. Her process was less emotional, and the result became mainly ideas about how to restructure her present work situation. Maria seemed therefore more involved in identity work than Christina whose work was mainly related to her working situation. Seemingly from these two examples identity work is very emotional compared to reflection regarding one's working situation.

The comparison between the two managers from the consultancy firms and the three veterinarians from Alpha is also interesting as the two groups in some sense represent two opposite extremes. The managers from the consultancy firms had extensive experiences from other management training, but for all three managers at Alpha this was their

first program. All three managers from Alpha seemed to enter the training with a lack of confidence in what it meant to be a manager and they searched for knowledge on management. They knew what being veterinarians meant, but they felt that they did not know so much about management. When David and Rikard started to follow in Marianne's footsteps they also started to question themselves as managers, but like Marianne they were never even close to doubting themselves as veterinarians. However, that was the only common factor, otherwise their identity processes went in three different directions.

Rikard was very doubtful regarding his managerial job. He became more and more assured that veterinarian was what he was and what he wanted to be. He even considered leaving his managerial position and going back to being a veterinarian without managerial duties. However, after a period of doubt he seemed to accept the situation of being both veterinarian and manager. His identity remained very heavily incorporated with the professional identity of veterinarians, but it was easier for him to accept the role of manager.

David was perceived as a very competent manager, but his opinion was that he did not know anything about management as he had mainly worked to be different from his precursor. Even if he also heavily identified with the veterinarian community, he started to identify more and more as manager. He started to see that all the things that he was already doing was in fact management. The training and relating to other managers made him a part of management discourse and management talk. He became more confident as manager, which also made him more active. Previously he had been somewhat passive regarding his department's strategy and he adopted a wait-and-see policy regarding structural problems at the department. When he started to define himself more as a manager he also started to *shape* his management instead of "waiting for it". He took care of the structural problems at his department and thereby he managed to keep his most valuable employee.

As said previously Marianne's doubt began already at the beginning of the training when she started to define what was important to her regarding the managerial role. Her identification was with her organization rather than with being manager. The questioning of being a manager was brought to a head when she was promoted, but this further step in her managerial career only meant frustration as it did not lead to any real organizational influence. She then decided to leave the manager job and she also left her organization for a specialist affiliation as veterinarian in another organization. She defined herself as veterinarian

and leaving her manager role was not hard, but after having spent 20 years in her organization the separation from the organization became very emotional and tough for her.

Östen, who's identity already before the training was based upon personal development discourse, had a very different process compared to the other participants, or as one of the other participants joked: "*he went the other way around, from strange to normal, while we went from normal to strange*". He had previously been so heavily identified with personal development discourse that he was perceived as "*a bit strange*" in his organization. During the immediate years before the training he seemed to have been more or less in a personal crisis, which created an emotional and unstable behaviour that was not appreciated at his work place. Giving full expression to feelings is a behaviour that is supported in the context of personal development, but hardly consistent with a manager job. The existential rhetoric of personal development, which means one true identity, made adjustment to other contexts than the personal development discourse difficult. For Östen the training was an opportunity to receive help to integrate personal development discourse and management discourse. For Östen personal change did not mainly come from the personal development content of the training, but from the management content, as it provided a manager identity based upon the personal development discourse. He experienced that he became strong and confident as a manager.

In summary, the training seemed to have mainly two influences. Firstly, it served as a provider of a new identity (a new attitude to oneself). Or, more correctly it served as a provider of a new role, which the participants to different extents identified with. Participants who searched for change and were willing to "give up" the old identity were more eager to make it a part of their identity. However, the one-dimensionality of identity (Anderson, 1995b), which lies implicit in existential rhetoric and implies giving up the social identity for the true self, made most participants reluctant to fully and immediately embrace the role and identify with it. They simply did not find the offered identity more attractive than their present one (Ashforth, 1998). For them it remained a new role, which they, to different extents, integrated in their daily life. (This will be further elaborated in chapter 8.1 regarding micro role transitions). Secondly, the self-reflection process was manifested mainly in identity work, which means making established identities visible, but also to elaborate, explore and experiment with identities. Obviously, this work is painful, frightening and emotionally tough. The structure of the training means that the direction of the managers' identity work is not

evident. Some elaborate a manager identity, while others decided they could not identify with the manager role and decided to leave it. The managers' personal life stories and their goals with the training seem more influential than the managers' leadership situations.

For most managers the training seemed to lead to the participants' redefining themselves during the course, but to a different extent and content. However, the extent to which this redefinition is realized in the organization varies. Identity is an ongoing story, but the managers themselves are not the only storytellers. People around them are a part of the managers' story and are storytellers as well (Albert, 1998; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998), which makes an identity process rather stable. The relational (Gergen, 1991) aspect of identity makes the influence of others significant in the identity processes. The influence of others will therefore be the focus of the next part.

7.1.3 The influence of others

Symbolic interactionism is based upon the view that the self and thereby identity is shaped in interaction with others (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969). The identity process can be described as an ongoing narrative (Albert, 1998; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998), but the interaction with others means that there is not only one storyteller. The identity as a narrative can be seen as the outcome of a negotiation between self and others. The influence of others, directly through interaction and indirectly through the generalized other, thereby makes the identity process rather stable as a significant change in the identity process must be "approved" by important others. The introspective management training made some of the participating managers start to redefine themselves. However, when they tried to realize this new identity in their organizations, it became clear to them that they were not the only storytellers of the narrative of themselves.

Generally, what was evident for all the managers was that the ingoing identity process (Albert, 1998) dominated the courses. However, identity is not only an ingoing process, it is also an outgoing process as the question "who am I?" is answered in relation to social systems of meaning of which we are a part of. The participants felt that a redefinition of themselves was rather easy during the courses, but that it was more difficult to realize this perceived identity change when being back in the daily organization. During the course the participants were part of another social system of meaning, which is open to self-redefinition and may

even encourage it. However, the participants' daily environment was evidently not that accepting or supporting to an identity transformation.

A very clear example of this is Maria. Her major source of frustration was her management group. She came home from the first and the second course week and felt as "someone new", but it became clear to her that a person never defines his or her identity in a vacuum[41]. Outsiders shape it as well, and their attitudes could either support a redefinition of identity or constrain the redefinition. Maria experienced a heavy resistance from her environment, which made her redefinition of herself more difficult. She was not able to live out the person she had found that she wanted to be during the courses. Her peers and manager openly rejected her new aspired identity with such words as *"why are you going to these courses, they only make you strange!"*. Her organizational environment became an example of direct interaction and its influence on the shaping of our identity. The direct interaction serves as a social control "here-and-now". However, the social memory of direct interaction and the imagined interaction with significant others constitute the generalized other (Mead, 1934/1975), which performs a social control that goes beyond "here-and-now". The generalized other represents people that are important to us and through the generalized other we can look upon ourselves with their eyes. One reason why identity processes are rather stable is because other people indirectly perform a social control on us through the generalized other, but we execute the control ourselves.

The humanistic rhetoric of the training says that the kind of social control that the generalized other performs on us is limiting. However, when not using the generalized other in defining themselves the participants found that they ended up in more fights than usual in their daily environment. Maria expressed it in the following way: *"actually it* [the fighting] *has got worse, I am no longer flexible and smart"*. To put it simply, the generalized other makes it possible to prevent actions that others will not approve of as they constitute a form of social memory of previous actions, but not "listening" to the generalized other means that the possible fights must be taken with these persons directly and not only "in the mind with the generalized other". To be flexible and smart, as Maria expressed it, could consequently be interpreted as "listening" to the generalized other, before acting.

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[41] Vacuum is perhaps not the best word, as self-evidently the manager takes part in another social system of meaning during the courses and is not in a vacuum. However, what I mean is that during the course the manager "is free" (and encouraged or even expected) to redefine him or herself.

An identity is best described as an ongoing narrative. The problem is that it is hard to create a story that is significantly different from the earlier story as there are many storytellers. In fact all people around you take part in constructing your social identity. The outsiders are still following their narrative about you, irrespective of what you have experienced during a course week. The daily environment therefore seems to act like an inhibitor of identity transformation, while the training acts as a catalyst of identity transformation.

Paradoxically the daily environment seems to work as an inhibitor even when the people around the manager expressed a wish for change. Several managers directly or indirectly said that they hoped that Marianne would change her manner of being during the management training. However, Marianne noticed that occasionally they seemed to miss her "old role" despite the fact that they had wanted her to change. Consequently, the stories that we follow regarding a person are not easy to change. We tend to relate to them irrespective of whether they are "good or bad".

7.2 Identity and alterity

The social systems of meaning that we feel part of influence our identity process, as the identity question - who am I? - is always answered in relation to a social system of meaning (Albert, 1998). However, Czarniawska (2000; 2002) clarifies that the social systems of meaning we do *not* relate to are also important in the identity process. Identity and alterity - what we relate to and what we do not relate to - are parts of the ongoing negotiation of identity, which was previously prooved to be an important part of the identity process of the studied introspective management training. This ongoing negotiation was also visible for the managers in this study and alterity turned out to be an important part of creating an identity.

Previously it was shown that the managers who were veterinarians, did not identify themselves as managers. There are notions regarding the relation between manager and veterinarian, where it is obvious that they see themselves as veterinarians, and then they "happen to be" managers as well, but being a manager is not integrated in their identity. All of them claimed that they did not know what it meant to be a manager and two of them explicitly said that learning to be a manager was the reason why they were there although all three had had manager positions for several years. Ashforth (2001) claims that being very identified with a role

identity makes it harder to take on other roles and integrate them as a part of the identity. For the veterinarians it seemed as if being a veterinarian meant *not* being a manager from an identity point of view. The identity of veterinarian and professional worker was implicitly an alterity of being manager. I am a veterinarian, *thus* I am not a manager, to draw it to an extreme. The professional culture and the professional discourse of veterinarians consequently seem to have aspects of alterity towards manager. For Alpha, where the organizational culture is heavily influenced by the professional culture of veterinarians, it is also integrated in the organization culture. Implicitly it has the consequence that to be perceived as a good veterinarian you should not actively want to be a manager. To aspire for a manager position is inconsistent with the professional discourse they are a part of. The professional culture and discourse of veterinarians have aspects of alterity towards management discourse, which makes it harder for managers who are veterinarians to create a manager identity, especially when the organizational culture is closely linked to the professional culture.

Thus, alterity on a discourse level can influence the shaping of an identity on the individual level. However, there are also examples of alterity on the individual level, which influence the shaping of an identity. David created a managerial identity by being different from his precursor in this position. He even claimed that, "*just by being different from him I was perceived as a successful manager*". Often role models are claimed to have a significant influence on identity processes, as you wish to liken the role model. However, David's example shows that "hair-raising examples" can also serve as a support in the identity process, as they show how you do *not* want to be. Symbols can be loaded with positive or negative value.

Even if the alterity process influenced David's identity process as a manager and in a sense helped him to create his manager identity, it left him with a feeling of not knowing what it meant to be manager. The only thing he thought he knew was how a manager should *not* be. Furthermore, being identified with the professional discourse of veterinarians still made his creation of a manager identity difficult, which influenced how he perceived the work he was doing. He thought he had not a very clear picture of what management was; the only thing he thought he knew was that it was something *different* to what he was doing. Consequently, even if the alterity process from his precursor on the individual level served to help him create his managerial role, the professional discourse still worked the other way around. It was telling

him that as he was a veterinarian, what he was doing was definitely not management.

The personal development discourse is in itself characterized by alterity. The training is based on the personal development discourse, which will be further elaborated in the next chapter regarding the influence of the training. However, one of the managers, Östen, strongly identified with the personal development discourse already before the training. Thereby his identity process to a large extent was an alterity process. As described in chapter 2.1.4 the common theme in personal development is to go inwards and find your inner self, which should be realized, empowered and followed. Implicitly the logic therefore is: say no to social pressure! As Watson (2001) notes all social systems of meanings, i.e. all cultures, constitute a form of social pressure. Cultures are perceived as something positive as they help us to define ourselves and to shape our identities. To draw it even further cultures provide templates of identities for individuals, which can be elaborated. The dark side of culture is that what culture imposes on us is hard to resist. Thereby, cultures delimit us from being the ones "we really are", according to personal development.

As Anderson (1995b) points out, postmodern persons are multi-community persons, and their lives as social beings are based on adjusting to shifting contexts. To draw it to an extreme, to be strongly identified with the personal development discourse thereby means to say no to all other social systems of meaning that we are a part of. For Östen, personal development influenced his whole life, even if the attachment was not so strong immediately prior to the training as a few years earlier. His colleagues then even perceived him as a bit strange. To live according to the inner self, meant for Östen not to fully participate in other social settings, or at least not following the implicit rules or the normal behaviour in these settings.

The generalized other (Mead, 1934/1975) serves as a "normalizer" to social settings, which helps us to adjust to different contexts. The generalized other is our own process, which enables us to take the role of others and look upon ourselves with their eyes (Mead, 1934/1975). If the generalized other does not hinder us from acting in an inappropriate way according to the social system of meaning, other people tend to react to our actions and the direct interaction can help us to adjust accordingly and eventually incorporate this "rule" in the generalized other for future occasions. The generalized other thereby works as a form of social memory. In the personal development discourse the implicit goal to neglect social pressure will make it seem "successful" to be perceived as

different to others and thereby both neglect the generalized other and other people's reactions in direct interaction. It will become a proof of being different to the "non-developed". Personal development is based on alterity more than identity. Krippner & Winkler (1995:167) put forward the following question: "*Can one identify an "inner state" not already prefigured in the public language? Can an American look inward and identify an emotion for which there is no English word?*". If we search for "the true self" it means it is something that we have not yet experienced and thereby cannot explicitly identify with. The only thing we know is what it *is not* - it is not our previous experience of the self. Consequently, the identity in existential psychology will be based on an alterity process to the outer self, i.e. everything else. Thereby there is an intrinsic contradiction in incorporating personal development discourse with any other discourse and consequently with daily life.

To summarise, the alterity process is a most evident part of the identity process of managers. The alterity works both on individual and on discourse level. On the individual level it has a symbolic interpretation of how we do *not* want to be and on the discourse level it is related to what discourses this discourse is different from. Different discourses can have aspects of alterity to other discourses, which makes it harder to identify with both. A strong identification with one discourse might make another discourse impossible. In particular the personal development discourse is hard to integrate with other discourses as it is based on alterity to all other discourses.

7.3 Multiple identities

The aim of introspective management training is to learn more about oneself and ultimately to find out who one really is. The rhetoric makes clear that the self is seen as something that can be pinned down and "found", a view that has gained a lot of criticism in recent research (Watson, 2001). The participating managers made it seem doubtful if there was a "true self" to be found. Rather the training made them more aware of their already existing identity processes and furthermore it seemed to work as a provider of a new identity, i.e. an alternative or rather complementary way to define themselves. To be more explicit, the training served as a provider of a new role and a new attitude to oneself. Some participants did identify with this role and made it a part of their identity, but some felt less identified with the role and for them it became "only" a role, i.e. a new leader role to step into, which shaped new actions as a leader.

Rather than finding the one-dimensionality in identity that many of them hoped for, the training added another identity to the other established identities. The managers' more active identity work through the training made the already established multiple identities more visible and thereby the conflict between identities was evident. The first part of the chapter will discuss the conflicting identities and the second part will deal with the new identity the training provided.

7.3.1 Conflicting identities

The introspective management training meant that the managers experienced clashes between discourses with different logics. Personal development discourse, which is the base of the training, was not easy to integrate with the pre-existing discourse in their workplaces. However, the picture is a lot more complicated than that, as the managers' daily environments hardly consist of one discourse alone. Rather the daily work consists of several discourses, which already compete with each other and to some extent are contradictory. In the problem development chapter, three main areas of conflict were mentioned and these will be further developed here with support from the empirical material.

The first is the potential conflict of being a professional worker and a manager, which relates to three of the participating managers who are veterinarians. As stated in chapter 2 (Dent & Whitehead, 2002; Cohen et al 2002) these relations are complicated. The second is a question of gender in the potential conflict of being a woman and a manager, which relates to the three women managers in the study. As Watson & Harris (1999) point out, it is more difficult for women in general to identify themselves as managers, because of the dominating discourse of managers as men. The third concerns the difficult issue of keeping a work/life balance (Watson & Harris, 1999). The managers' struggle to fit into all these different discourses will be described.

In chapter 7.2.1 the implicit conflict on discourse level between the professional discourse of veterinarians and management discourse was discussed. For the veterinary managers this became most evident. The organization where the three veterinarians are employed is dominated by veterinarians as they have the most important positions in the organization – the general director is a veterinarian and so are most of the department managers. In the empirical part of this thesis there are a number of statements that define what it means for them to be both

veterinarians and managers, but also what it means to be veterinarian in their organization. Consider this comment for example:

We are 25 department managers directly subordinated to the general director and that is perhaps too many, but it would be impossible to have middle managers in between, because the ones who are suitable for such a job, they don't want it and those who want it, we don't want to have... that is a problem here. All the veterinarians want to be veterinarians and not managers, but at the same time, we want veterinarians as managers and not anyone else... (Rikard, participating manager)

Identity exists on numerous levels and on each level it is defined in relation to the existing culture or to the social systems of meaning around it (Fiol et al., 1998). Each level has its dominating social systems of meaning, but the common characteristic is that it always answers the question "Who are we?" in relation to larger contexts of meaning. Alpha:s organizational identity is obviously defined in relation to the profession culture of veterinarians, which then also influences the organizational culture of Alpha. The statement above illustrates this culture in terms of what is important in the organization. Obviously, to be a veterinarian is perceived as "more important" than being a manager and embedded in the culture there seems to be an implicit assumption that veterinarians should not want to be managers, i.e. they should not aspire for such a position. Consequently, the "right" identity in the organization is veterinarian and by being "too managerial" you risk losing credibility as veterinarian among the other veterinarians. Even though the best practicing veterinarians become managers ("*we want veterinarians as managers and not anyone else*"), the normal procedure is that they remain mainly operational, and "*manager is something you are "on top" of everything else*". However, the two affiliations require a careful balancing and the veterinarians who are managers must be careful not to weaken their identities as veterinarians. Thereby they have difficulties in fully developing a manager identity.

In the professional culture of veterinarians is an embedded alterity towards management discourse (I am a veterinarian, *thus* I am not a manager), which makes the combination veterinarian and manager difficult. In Alpha it becomes especially difficult since the organizational culture is closely related to the profession culture of veterinarians. Consequently, both the profession culture and the organizational culture work as resistance to the development of an identity as manager, as it conflicts with the dominating identity that both the profession culture and

the organization culture provide. Watson (2001) argues that culture serves as an identity provider, but obviously culture also restricts which identities that can be elaborated and established.

Watson & Harris (1999) showed that women experienced the identity as manager as conflicting with their identity as women. Feminist theories (Kanter, 1977; Calás & Smircich, 1991; Collinson & Hearn, 1994) explain this notion by the conformity between the construction of management and the construction of masculinity. As men and women are defined as opposites the conformity between manager and man has the consequence that the construction of femininity is seen as an opposite to the construction of management. Consequently, the identity as woman and the identity as manager seem to be in conflict when they are evoked at the same time. Holgersson (2003) argues that women managers have mainly two ways to balance these contradictory ideals. Some adapt male managers' behaviour and thereby gain by being viewed as competent, but they are seen as mannish, which is regarded as negative. Female managers who choose to act differently are seen as divergent and less competent as managers. Marianne was perceived as extremely competent by her peers, but also as very angry. Consequently, she seemed to have chosen the male manager behaviour, which acknowledged her for her competence, but at the expense of being perceived as angry and square in her way.

In fact two of the women in the training that I followed (Marianne and Maria) and the female manager who had participated in the training earlier (Kerstin) were all perceived as "angry", "tough", "square", by other members of their organizations. All of them experienced a sense of guilt about how they were and to some extent they came to the training to change their way of being. The identity work in the training made them realize that the expectations of others were very influential in their ways of being. Maria understood that her anger in her management group was related to a role that became self-fulfilling. She perceived herself (and was perceived by others) as different from the others - "*the others are older and more experienced, big strong men with loud voices*" – and her role then became to strike as an underdog, which made her the "angry one" in the group. Homosociality (Lipman-Blumen, 1976; Kanter, 1977) i.e. that people tend to identity with individuals that they perceive as similar to themselves, is often used as an explanation of the conformity of managers. Maria became a "victim" of the other managers' identity work (cp. Holgersson 2003). They identified with each other (other men of the same age) and dissociated from her (woman and young). Thus,

homosociality shows the structural effects of identity and alterity in identity work. Marianne often challenged the other managers (male or female). She was admired for her splendid intellect, but also feared because of her ability to use that intellect in arguments. Marianne neither chose to show loyalty to the men (by not fighting them) nor did she choose to not compete with them. She did the opposite and challenged them and consequently she was seen as rabid (Kanter, 1977[42]; Lindgren, 1992).

Kerstin experienced that the training made her pay less attention to social pressure. She had always heard that she was tough and had thought of it as something bad. However, the training made her change her attitude to herself. She considered herself to be as tough as before, but without the negative value etiquette that her surroundings had kept imposing on her. Kanter (1977) also notices that the minority (women managers) is not allowed to be individuals, but they are seen as representatives for the group "women". Consequently, individual differences compared to the stereotype are perceived as "wrong", which Kerstin most evidently experienced, but through the training learned to deal with.

Without being directly discriminated, the women managers daily met concealed gender preservative messages (Eriksson, 2000), as for example Christina's subordinate who responded to her big workload by arguing that she should consider that she is the mother of a 9-year-old son. Consequently, she is met by the expectations that "a mother" should not work as much as "a manager" needs to do. Thus, the identities are conflicting.

Gender identity is one of the other identities, and identity is full of nuances and is socially influenced (Eriksson, 2000) in a way that makes the identities of manager and woman seem conflicting. This makes it harder for women to create a manager identity. Women are expected to adjust to fit, but the rhetoric of the training is to find your true self and live according to it. Consequently, the training makes them, more or less unconsciously, fight the gender power structure.

A matter closely related to the difficulties for women to create a manager identity is the work/life balance. The difficulties to make work as manager fit with the rest of one's life are most evident for most managers

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[42] Kanter (1977) connected women's strategies to their minority position in organizations. On paper, Alpha complies with equality demands even when it comes to the number of woman managers, but considering Marianne's story about the preparation group of the management group, the organization still seems to be dominated by men, despite the numbers.

(Cooper, 1981), but especially for women considering their expected bigger responsibility at home and regarding family. Some of the managers in the study even said that they attended the training to find some balance in their lives. The training seemed to make them give priority to other things in life and several of the managers reported that they started to work less. Previous research (Vielba, 1995; Watson & Harris, 1999) has showed that many managers view their contracts with their organizations as "doing whatever it takes" to complete their tasks. "Doing whatever it takes" is very abstract and hardly measurable. Basically, it is a social construction based on the managers' conscience, which can cause a lot of stress. Having a guilty conscience about their job in relation to their family was very evident for some of the managers in the study. Christina expressed it as "*when I am at home I have a guilty conscience about my job and when I am at work I have a guilty conscience about my family*". The training made several of the managers work less and give priority to other things in life. Marianne had always been working a lot and often worked late hours "instead" of her subordinates who had families. She was a very clear example of "doing whatever it takes" (Vielba, 1995; Watson & Harris, 1999) as manager, she even sacrificed her own private life to support her subordinates. During the training Marianne started to give priority to herself. She understood that her private life was not of less importance just because she had no family. Consequently, even if the focus was management training, it made the managers care less about management. However, the long term effects might still have been positive for the organizations as at least a couple of the managers seemed on the verge of being burnt out when entering the training (both according to themselves and according to other subordinates and peers). As Watson & Harris (1999) point out, the difficulty of keeping up a satisfactory balance between work and other aspects of life is potentially damaging for personal health and well-being, which in the long run is damaging for the organization as well.

In addition to working less hours, which perhaps is the most self-evident way to find work/life balance if you work a lot, the managers developed several different strategies to deal with the work/life balance during the training. Christina understood that the problem for her was a lack of planning when it came to work/life balance. She did a lot of planning at work, but considering her tasks, but not considering when she was able to leave for home. Christina's strategy became to integrate her family life into the planning of her work. She made her work/life balance become an important part of the planning, which enabled her to work late some days a week without a guilty conscience for her family. She experienced this as very relieving and it affected her feeling of well-being. Rikard started to

rediscover hobbies that he had had previously in his life. He found his long-distance skates again and he started to write short stories. To fully enjoy other aspects of life became a relief for him and even if he still worked a lot he did not feel the same risk of being burnt out as before the training. David changed his view of work. He still worked as much as before, but without a guilty conscience of not having time to do it fully. Consequently, he changed his social construction of work and it made him feel less stress.

Conger (2001) points out that self-actualising, which the studied introspective management training focuses on, is not necessarily connected to management. The managers in this study all started to give priority to other things in life as well, but in the long run it could be considered as positive for their organizations and their management as well as it did considerably good for their well-being. "Doing whatever it takes" (Vielba, 1995; Watson & Harris, 1999), which is the guiding "contract" for many managers today is potentially dangerous as it is very vague. However, its vagueness has a potential that the managers "took advantage of" during the training. "Whatever it takes" is a social construction and in which way the managers construct "whatever it takes" influences how they perceive their efforts of completing their tasks and ultimately their well-being.

7.3.2 The training as a provider of a new identity

Most managers meant that they had experienced a personal change to different extents. They conceptualized themselves differently (Albert, 1998), i.e. they had experienced an identity change. In the symbolic interactionism identity change has aspects of an oxymoron as identity is a process and thereby always changing. More correctly it should be viewed as a significant change in the ongoing identity process or a tension in the ongoing process. Alternatively, as Ashforth (2001) suggests, an identity-based transformation could be viewed as an access to "a new identity" as a role identity to some extent is always situational. Consequently, the training rather serves as a provider of a new role and ultimately a new identity if the participants start to identify with the new role.

However, the new role (and ultimately the new identity) had different meaning for different participants. For the veterinary managers the training constituted their first in-depth impact with management discourse. For them it served as a provider of a manager role. The provided manager role could hardly be seen as a "mainstream manager

role", but for those who did not have a comparison it became their manager role. However, the conflict between the veterinarian identity and the manager identity hindered them from fully integrating the manager role into their identities. For the managers at the consultancy firms, who could already be seen as a part of the management discourse, the provided manager role became an alternative role to the many different manager roles they already possessed. The difference was that this role was based on personal growth discourse. Maria's identification with the provided role was very strong in the beginning and she tried to let go of all other manager roles that she did not identify with. She felt that "this was the way she was" and experienced synchronization between how she viewed herself and the role, while the other manager roles and the connected role identities were conflicting. Later she started to integrate the provided manager role as one role among others and the identification with that role and the alterity to the others became less strong. For Christina it became an alternative role, which she tried to integrate with the other roles from the start. She never experienced the strong conflict between them. Finally, for Östen who already was strongly identified with the personal growth discourse, the provided role served as a possibility to fit between personal growth discourse and being manager, which had been problematic for him.

Symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969) emphasizes the importance of interaction and negotiation in the shaping of identity. Consequently, roles and identities are shaped by negotiation with what "we bring into the situation" (in this case the participating managers' personal life stories, expectations, etc) and what "the other brings into the situation" (in this case the management training and the leadership trainers' aims, expectations, actions, etc). As all managers bring their unique personality into the situation different participants elaborate the role that the management training provides differently and thereby the outcome becomes several different roles/identities.

7.4 Appropriateness

The multiple identities and roles the participants bring into the training are increased with another role/identity during the training. During the training the participating managers consciously elaborate and work with their identities, for most of them for the first time in their lives. However, they have already dealt with the ambiguity of multiple and in some cases contradictory identities. Such ambiguous situations are dealt with following a logic of appropriateness rather than a logic of rationality

(March, 1994). The logic of appropriateness is based upon the theory that the managers are conceived to ask three questions (explicitly or implicitly):

1. The question of *recognition*: What kind of situation is this?
2. The question of *identity*: What kind of person am I?
3. The question of *rules*: What does a person such as I do in a situation like this?

The logic of appropriateness has similarities with the concept reflection-in-action, developed by Schön (1983), as the process is performed while acting. The training has previously been described as mainly being manifested in an identity process. Consequently, the training means focusing on the second of the questions, but the fact that the situation is new for most of the managers (i.e. they cannot recognize it) and they do not know what rules are applicable (they have not been in such a situation before) the identity work can be performed with very little adjustment to prior expectations. The advantage is that the identity process can more easily be elaborated, as normally it is rather rigid due to expectations connected to certain situations and from people around us. Thus the training works as an experimental laboratory. The problems started when the managers tried to apply it in their daily environment. Then they had to give a lot more attention to the situation (recognition) and rules (defining the boundaries of what is appropriate) than during the training (March, 1994). When some of them applied the same strong focus on identity work at the expense of recognizing the situation and giving attention to the rules in their organization, they were perceived as too self-centred. The answer to the question of rules gives a space of manoeuvre, i.e. it defines what is appropriate. To be "one-dimensional" in interpreting the situations (i.e. not recognizing different situations) and not follow the rules means not following the logic of appropriateness.

Östen constitutes the most obvious example of self-centered behaviour due to "too much introspection" during the first half of the training, but he seemed to have had this behaviour also before the training. He seemed very concerned with himself, which had a bad influence on his credibility and reputation in the organization. Östen's experienced breakthrough during the fourth course week of training changed this. Basically, the introspective management training seemed to make him go from "over-reflecting" to "reasonably reflecting". During the first part of the training he emphasized the importance to him of "*being in process*" as he called it. This was a state when he was very vulnerable and was mainly concerned with himself. At this early stage of the training, his introspection process could be described as introspection-instead-of-

action rather than introspection-in-action. Introspection-in-action is a translation of Schön's (1983) concept reflection-in-action, which means reflection while acting. Introspection-in-action would then mean that introspection is performed while acting, not as a separate state. The potential of this would be that everyday life is used as a means of identity work and personal growth.

The limits connected to introspection in practice seem to be that introspection could actually prevent action, especially in the beginning of training when "learning" introspection. If the managers think too much about themselves and are too concerned with their own identity work, they could be seen as less sincere in the managerial role by their subordinates, peers and superiors, since the managerial role to a large extent concerns caring about other people. Some of the managers' behaviour in their organizations early in the training seemed rather self-centered.

Introspection mainly seemed to mean to "stop-and-think" for the participants in the beginning, not as a state while acting. For example Marianne mentions that the training made her take a halt now and then. Östen and David reported the same. In general the managers seemed to experience an inability to act when learning introspection. Similarities can be found in Brunsson (1982), who showed that organizations that were very focused on analyzing different decision alternatives became unable to act. Analysing different alternatives might actually prevent action. To put it simply, many managers seemed to analyze themselves and their work situations at the expense of action early in their processes.

The logic of appropriateness (March, 1994) has the same foundation as symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969). Mead (1934/1975) describes communication with the "generalized others" as a form of communication with oneself. The "generalized others" constitute how individuals think others view them, i.e. they look upon themselves through the eyes of significant others, which help them construct their selves. The questions March (1994) proposes as the basis of the logic of appropriateness constitute a similar form of communication with oneself, but in the communication with oneself is implicitly a conversation with the situation and others regarding what is appropriate. The leadership trainers work in a similar way to what Schön (1987) suggests is the best way to teach professionals reflection-in-action. They used mainly coaching rather than teaching. Coaching means responding with questions instead of answers to the participants' questions and it thereby functions as an invitation to reflect on and question taken-for-granted assumptions.

Seemingly the leadership trainers' questions function as a substitute to the managers' own communication with themselves while learning and elaborating the process.

To some extent all participants in the training stated that introspection-in-action came more and more naturally to them, even if their descriptions of this ability were rather vague. After the training most managers argued that they "*had brought something*" with them after the training, but they had problems to specify what it was. However, Östen's subordinates gave an example of what I consider as introspection-in-action. They argued that during the program Östen was occupied with introspection and other similar activities, i.e. he was so occupied with reflecting upon himself that he did less of other things. A few months after the training his subordinates experienced that Östen's focus had shifted away from introspection and other activities from the courses. Instead he seemed to have integrated them into his actions. I see this as an example of going from introspection as a separate state to introspection-in-action.

Two of the participants from previous years, Ingemar and Niklas, constitute other examples. They had experience of "working with themselves" from psychotherapy and in Ingemar's case also personal development. Consequently, introspection was not a new thing for them to the same extent as for most of the managers[43] who participated the year I followed the program. They were "trained introspectors" already when entering the program and continued to develop that ability. Ingemar describes what I call introspection-in-action as the ability of being aware of what happens, without starting to analyze to such an extent that you have to slow down the things you are doing. He found that he had developed this ability during the program and that he still had advantages of it several years after having completed the training.

The pursuit of appropriateness involves experimentation with new identities, inconsistency and "self-discovery" (March, 1994). The training seems to work as an arena for such exploration and elaboration, which makes *experiential learning* possible. Experiential learning (individuals learn to evoke (or not to evoke) an identity in a situation by positive or negative experiences from the past) is one of four psychological mechanisms that interact in noticing the relevance of identities and rules in the situation (March, 1994). What makes introspective management training especially strong in experiential learning is the fact that it occurs

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[43] An exception was Östen who had participated in a lot of courses and programs in personal development, but he seemed rather an example of "introspection-instead-of-action", when entering the training.

on the emotional level, i.e. it is rather about experiencing and taking part in something real than simply cognitive teaching (Conger, 2001). The studied management training is to a large extent based on different role-plays and other exercises, which the participants afterwards reflect upon. These exercises offer *opportunities* to *experience* different situations and to elaborate different identities in these situations. Niklas experienced that he gained what he called an emotional understanding from experiencing situations that he previously had only an intellectual understanding of.

> *I had an intellectual, cognitive understanding of many of my issues. But knowing on an intellectual level that I should change something was very far from actually doing it. The training helped me to have an emotional understanding of the same subject... that was much deeper and resulted in an immediate change in my behaviour.* (Niklas, participating manager, 5 years ago)

Conger (2001) states that such experiences in some cases offer a surprisingly permanent change in behaviour, because of the emotional content. Furthermore, all of the participating managers experienced different *significant events* (Watson, 1996b) that made a significant impact on them. Significant events are events, which, in looking back and reflecting on them, the managers felt had had a major impact on their perceptions of the world and themselves. Examples of such events for the participants are Östen's regaining of his strength and confidence, Christina's experience regarding the multiple interpretations of information and Kerstin's exploration of herself beyond her responsibilities, but the list could be made longer.

The training seems to have potential in terms of experiential learning considering identities. Firstly as it serves as an arena to explore and elaborate identities. Secondly, as the emotional content connected to the experiences has had a great impact on the participants. Thirdly, as it has an ability to create significant events for the participants, which makes them look upon themselves with different eyes.

Consequently, introspective management training seems to facilitate experiential learning when it comes to appropriateness. However, as March (1994) points out experiential learning is only one of four mechanisms that interact in defining which identity is appropriate. Another of the mechanisms is *the social context of others*. The training is performed out of its normal social context. Thus, the experiential learning the managers might experience is not connected to the social context, which explains why the managers felt that they had "learnt" so much

during the course weeks, but had great difficulties in giving expression to it in their organizations. Even if the experiential learning made them redefine what identities to evoke in different situations, the social context of their organization still constituted the same force to evoke the same identity as before. The social context had not changed during the course week, but must be the subject of change through negotiation when the managers are back in their normal setting. Some of the managers experienced this as a set-back, while others comfortably went into their normal roles when back in their organizations, leaving the experiences from the training behind.

The two other mechanisms, *categorization* and *recency*, could be used to further understand the difficulties of the veterinarians to identify as managers. *Categorization* is based upon the idea that the self consists of central and peripheral parts. Identities that constitute conceptualisations of the more central parts of the self are likely to be evoked more frequently. Furthermore, aspects of the self that are seen as central are more fully elaborated, while more peripheral aspects of the self are less elaborated, less frequently evoked, and less burdened with requirements of consistency than are more central aspects. *Recency* means that identities that have recently been evoked are likely to be evoked again. Previously, it has been pointed out several times how central being a veterinarian was for the veterinary managers in their definitions of themselves. Thus, the *categorization* of veterinarian was that it was seen as a central part of their selves, which also made identity as veterinarians fully elaborated, while their manager identity, which was seen as more peripheral became less elaborated. Consequently, the veterinary managers felt they did not know that much about what it is to be a manager. Furthermore, as being a manager was a peripheral part of the self it was not as frequently evoked as the veterinarian identity. Thus, *recency* made the veterinarian more likely to be evoked, even in situations when it "should not" have been evoked. An example of that is Rikard's subordinate who felt like a hypothesis which should be rejected when she came with a suggestion. Both *categorization* and *recency* work in a direction that facilitates for the veterinarian identity to be evoked, even when a manager identity should have been evoked considering the situation.

The four psychological mechanisms – experiential learning, social context of others, categorization and recency – interact in defining what identity to evoke. However, their interaction might be complicated and to some extent contradictory. Introspective management training can mainly

serve as an arena for experiential learning, which could also indirectly influence the other three mechanisms.

Not all parts of an individual's identities are available at the same time. Managers do not act like managers in all situations. The logic of appropriateness influences action, as it means that the manager defines what actions are appropriate, in relation to identity, rules and situation. Normally, such coordinated behaviour emerged from subjective perceptions and "negotiated" with explicit and implicit others is known as *social roles* (March, 1994). The logic of appropriateness thereby means frequent role transitions, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

8. ROLE TRANSITIONS

Role transitions are normally divided into micro role transitions, which are daily events, and macro role transitions, which means permanent change and therefore are more rare. The first part of the chapter will discuss micro role transitions and the second part macro role transitions.

8.1 Micro role transitions

What makes micro role transitions intriguing is that to switch roles is to potentially switch worlds; and yet most people do it several times a day with hardly a second thought (Ashforth et al., 2000). Micro role transitions are particularly frequent for managers considering their daily work (see chapter 2.2) as they participate in many different contexts interacting with different persons. Still, most managers seem to switch between different manager roles (and from manager roles to other roles) without even noticing it. An example from a manager's daily micro role transitions is the performance appraisal interview that David held with a subordinate manager with me as an observer. During some parts of the interview David acted as a generalist, who helped the subordinated manager to find his own answers and needs by himself. When discussing the managers' subordinates, David acted as a supervisor or a peer (although he is superior) giving advice about what to do, without imposing any solutions. He smoothly changed roles during the performance appraisal interview, depending on the kind of issue that was dealt with, but seemingly without being aware of the transitions. These different manager roles are examples of *integrated* roles (Ashforth et al., 2000), between which the boundaries are vague. Then the micro role transitions are made almost without conscious effort. The introspective management training could be seen as a provider of different manager roles and the first part of the chapter will discuss the relation between the training and the managers' organizations.

8.1.1 The training and the organization

The fact that the introspective management training is an off-site[44] training means different space and time in comparison with the daily organization. The home organization is one space and time, and the course is another space and time. They will never come into direct

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[44] In the term off-site I define the term as meaning that the training is separated from their normal working environment both when it comes to place and time, but also that there is an external organizer and participants from other organizations.

contact; only indirectly through the managers that are traveling between these different spaces and times.

However, the fact that the managers travel between these different spaces and times will make these two different spaces and times come into contact. The person, according to symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934/1975; Blumer, 1969), is namely not only shaped through direct interaction here-and-now, but the generalized other influences the shaping of the self beyond here-and-now. Consequently, the managers "bring" their generalized others to the training and thereby they bring their context to some extent as well. However, as the aim and rhetoric of the training is to find the true self, the generalized other is actively resisted and neglected during the training.

Most managers noted the difficulties to return to their own organizations after the course weeks, especially in the beginning of the training. For most of the managers the impact from the personal growth discourse was totally new and the manager role, provided indirectly through the training, meant a fundamentally new way to look upon the world. The significant difference between the worldviews of the training and their daily organizational environment - Maria for example experienced it like living in two different worlds, with different orders - together with the fact that the two were separated in time and space made the transitions hard. The roles provided by the training and the manager roles held at the organizations were strongly *segmented*. Two roles are segmented if they are strongly connected with different contexts (Ashforth et al., 2000), as they are here. The challenge with micro role transitions between segmented roles is to cross the boundaries between them, which obviously was difficult and hard for the managers. The managers dealt with their return to their organizations differently. While most managers performed a micro role transition to their "old" manager roles when leaving the training and returning to the organization, Maria wanted to remain in the manager role that she had found during the training. She then experienced the importance of the *role set,* i.e. the other roles (and thereby persons) that are connected to one role (Ashforth et al., 2000). The people in her organization did not accept what for them looked like a complete role shift. Maria had an illusion that the world would change when she changed, but the illusion was shattered. A week is not long when you are at the office in your daily environment, but after Maria's experience of having taken a revolutionary step in her personal development it was hard to understand for her that her environment had not changed in the same way. She obviously experienced this as frustrating. She had "found who she really was" during the training, i.e.

she had redefined herself and her "new" identity was not consistent with the role that her organization imposed on her. Suddenly micro role transitions were not enough to facilitate fitting in, which in the prolongation lead to a macro role transition (further elaborated in chapter 8.2). Micro role transitions seem to be the daily fitting process, but when adjustments "within the system" are not enough it seems to lead to macro role transitions, i.e. changing systems.

For the other managers the roles at the training and the roles "at home" were held separate in the beginning of training, i.e. the roles were strongly segmented and the different times and spaces increased the segmentation. However, after a while some of the managers made small attempts to adapt the roles from the training to their daily manager roles. The process had started to reduce the segmentation and increase the flexibility of the roles – a role integration process.

8.1.2 Role integration

Ashforth (1998) notes that an anticipatory identification with a new role is a common way to start a moving/transition phase. Consequently, for the managers the training became the arena to "test" the new role, without having to bring it into their daily environment immediately.

As Ashforth et al. (2000) point out a transition is always harder to perform *within* a social domain than *between* social domains. Maria became painfully aware of this fact when she tried to make a fundamental change in her manager role. Instead micro role transitions *within* a social domain are more often manifested in negotiating the boundaries of a role.

For Marianne and David this became evident during their "small attempts" to be and act differently in their daily contexts. Marianne tried to act differently in meetings, but she proved to be less successful at her own department than when she deputized as manager at another department, which supports Ashforth's (2000 et. al) argument that a transition between social domains is easier than a transition within a domain. A transition within a social domain requires stronger articulation, which David's subordinates experienced during his "small attempts":

> *On some occasions I have noticed that he has tried to be more distinct than usual. He has tried to emphasize what he wants. Still, it is obvious that it's new for him... he tends to over-do it, but I can*

take this shakiness in his behaviour as I think something good will come of it. (Subordinate to David)

Weick (1984) emphasizes the importance of "small wins" to keep the negotiation going. David experienced small wins, for example a very successful development conversation, and these small wins supported the ongoing negotiation of the boundaries of his manager role, even if the transition was not that dramatic. From an interactionist perspective the shaping of the self can be described as an ongoing negotiation between oneself and others (Mead, 1934/1975). These small wins (Weick, 1984), which strengthen a change or transition phase, can from an interactionist perspective be regarded as successful small negotiating steps of the shaping of the self.

Most managers experienced that their colleagues at best were totally uninterested in their process or at worst showed a direct resistance to it, like in Maria's case. In contrast to most of the other managers' surroundings, Östen's colleagues showed a great interest in his process and were very supportive of it. Östen's support might partly be a result of the open climate in his group and partly a result of the support of his colleagues, as they were working with organizational development, had a professional interest in and a professional understanding of his process. The example further shows the importance of the *role set* (Ashforth et al, 2000): the negotiation of the boundaries of the role is performed within the role set, i.e. with the other roles/persons related to the role that is renegotiated. The role set could either be supportive as in the example of Östen or resistant as in the example of Maria. When the colleagues are ignorant of the process, as they are in most cases, it works as a resistance as it means that the role set is not involved in a negotiation of the role boundaries.

The role integration was in most cases rather successful, but it was not particularly comprehensive. The participants seemed in most cases to establish a complement to their existing manager roles, which made them have access to another role that in many cases was very useful. Micro role transitions between integrated roles do not constitute such clear transitions as between segmented roles. Rather two equivalent interpretations are possible: either you see it as a manager has one manager role and the role is multifaceted or you see it as a manager has many different manager roles and there are frequent micro role transitions between them. I find that both descriptions are appropriate, as they both focus on the variety of a manager's appearance.

The training made the managers establish an additional and complementary manager role, which was useful in their managerial work. However, the problem was that the rhetoric of the training indirectly said that the provided role was "the right role", thus the only role. This one-dimensionality made different manager situations confusing for the managers. The provided role is a complement and nothing else, and as a complement it can be useful, but the downside is when the managers experience a failure when they use other manager roles. For example Niklas described it as a failure as soon as he was controlling others, which is in line with the rhetoric of the management training, but hardly in line with managerial work, which consists of control among other activities. Furthermore, Marianne experienced it as a failure when she tried to live according to the provided role, but did not succeed. The one-dimensionality made her relate the failure to herself as person as not being able to live according to what she had learnt, when perhaps a more correct interpretation would be that the role was not appropriate to the situation she experienced.

To sum up, the introspective management training seems to have potential in providing an alternative and complementary manager role, which can be useful together with the other established manager roles, but the danger is that the one-dimensional rhetoric of the training makes integration between different manager roles more difficult and causes a limitation of manager roles rather than an addition.

8.1.3 Hinders of micro role transitions

The most obvious hinder of micro role transitions is to hold a certain role very dear. Ashforth (2001) claims that all roles are grounded in a role identity, which is a part of our social identity. People who identify strongly with a role and make the role identity a very important part of their social identity will make role transitions very difficult.

Four of the managers had very strong identifications with certain roles. The three veterinarians were strongly identified with their role as veterinarians and the roles as veterinarians were important in how they defined themselves. The manager from Beta was strongly identified with the personal growth discourse and his roles had to be consistent with that discourse.

These four very strong identifications made role transitions more difficult. It was particularly evident as none of the strong identifications

were with the manager role. All four consequently had difficulties in elaborating and developing a manager role. The management training seemed to work in two directions for the veterinarians. On the one hand it was an arena where they could elaborate their managerial roles, but on the other hand the one-dimensional focus of the training (find your true self) made them "choose" their veterinarian identity at the expense of other identities (such as a manager identity). Thus, the influences were two-fold and it was not self-evident, which was stronger. On the one hand they got access to a manager role, but on the other hand their identification with their veterinarian role became even stronger, i.e. the role identity as veterinarian was strengthened. Two of the managers seemed to develop their manager roles, while one of the managers chose to leave the manager position for a specialist job as a veterinarian. For the manager at Beta the training worked as a provider of a manager role that was consistent with the personal growth discourse.

If role identity is an important part of the self, i.e. the identification with the role is strong, then micro role transitions are more difficult. The training has a potential to loosen up this strong identification, by serving as an arena for role and identity elaboration and exploration, but the one-dimensionality of the training also risks strengthening further the identification with one role.

8.1.4 Finding the balance

Managers' identity processes related to different situations they meet during a day evoke different identities and different rules, which make them shift roles several times during a day. Zaleznik (1989) argued that organizations need people who are flexible and can take on many roles, and also abandon many roles without being disabled by a sense of loss. However, this potential organizational need requires a lot from the individual. They must balance between on the one hand risking being over identified with one role and thereby unable to make micro role transitions and on the other hand risking losing a sense of ordered and consistent self where immense micro role transitions are performed without a sense of anchoring in oneself.

The strategies to find a balance varied between different managers. David got more self-confident when his managerial behaviour was confirmed during the training and he had some small success stories in implementing new ways to act as a manager. This made him incorporate his managerial role with new attitudes to what he was doing, which made

him feel better and less stressed in managing. For him, the management training seemed to work as a confirmation of what he already was doing was managing; he had just not labelled it as managing, as he saw himself as a veterinarian. He found his balance through strengthening the manager role. Marianne chose another direction as she chose one of the conflicting roles when she decided to drop her manager job for a specialist job as a veterinarian. Östen found his balance by finding a manager role that fitted the personal growth discourse, which he was heavily identified with. Maria and Christina found balance through leaving their present jobs for other manager jobs, and in Christina's case also another organization. However, Rikard's way to find a balance was perhaps most interesting. He identified more with his veterinarian profession than his manager role and he doubted if he should continue as a manager at all. During the training he experienced that he redefined himself, but he was not able to fully live out this new identity in his organization, which gave him doubts about his future. However, he found his balance without leaving the organization. Instead he ventilated his frustration through the writing of short stories. Thus, he had created a new role for himself, where he could create an outlet for the questions that came up during the training and live out the identity he had established. As Ashforth (2001) claims, every role is grounded in a role identity and the identity-based transformation that Rikard experienced during the course now had its manifestation in a new role and thereby a new activity. Finding his balance in this way made him re-incorporate with his organization and his tasks as both veterinarian and manager with a newfound commitment and energy.

There is no single standard solution to find balance in life between different roles, different identities and different social settings and requirements. Still, the managers show that it is possible through elaboration and working with themselves. The struggle to fit seems most evident in most managers' lives and to be able to find a balance seem important to be able to enjoy a manager job.


8.2 Macro role transitions

The fitting process through micro role transitions described in the previous chapter is an important part of a manager's everyday life. The fitting process over time could be viewed as an ongoing negotiation between individual and organization. Arthur et al (1989) described the major shift in career theory in the 1970s (Hall, 1976; Kotter et al, 1978)

in the same words: Career was then seen as an individual-organizational negotiation. Consequently, I argue that career can be viewed as manifestations of the described attempts of fitting in. Over time it can be conceptualized as a series of transitions from one role to another within an organizational or occupational social system (Barley, 1989). Macro role transitions (Lewin, 1951; Van Gennep, 1909/1960; Ashforth, 2001) *within* an organization can be viewed as the product of a successful individual-organizational negotiation, while macro role transitions *between* organizations is the product of either the individual or the organization not being satisfied with the outcome of the negotiation. Both are examples of when the daily adjustment to different contexts and situations through micro role transitions are not enough to fit in, and the individual aspired for permanent change.

In the theoretical framework the following model, based on a combination of Lewin's (1951) field theory and Van Gennep's (1909/1960) rites of passage, was used to understand macro role transitions. Neither Lewin nor Van Gennep could be considered as interactionists. However, as stated in the theoretical framework, I find the model so general that I can use it from an interactionist perspective with the notion that the different stages in the model represent a simplification of an ongoing process without clear-cut different stages.

Figure 8.1 Macro role transitions
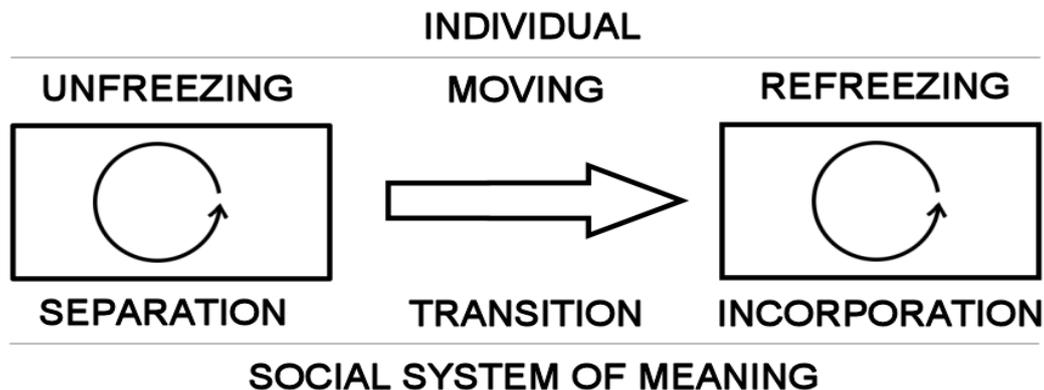
Source: Idea from Lewin (1951) and Van Gennep (1909/1960)

8.2.1 Unfreezing/separation

Lewin (1951) argues that this phase "unfreezes" the individual and thereby fosters receptiveness to change. Separation from the current states mobilizes energy to effect transition, which is the reason why Ashforth

(2000) claims that the exit of the psychological role therefore starts long before the actual exit of the physical role. Recapitulating chapter 7.1.1 the three female managers entered the training with openness for change. It was most evident for Maria, who even stated that she wanted change, but she was not sure to what. Both Marianne and Christina had carefully considered their choice of this particular management training. They wanted change in different ways.

Schein (1978) states that the worst thing with change is not embracing the new but leaving the old, which requires preparation. Consequently, as Ashforth (2000) puts it, the psychological transition starts long before the "real" or physical transition takes place in terms of a new job for example. Maria, Christina and Marianne are all examples of managers who more or less consciously had already started to separate from their present manager roles before the training. Christina stated clearly that she thought of the training as a way to find out what her next career step should be. Maria and Marianne on the other hand did not see the training directly as a way to achieve a new position. However, Maria said that she felt that the manager job was no challenge any more and that she got the energy from other activities she had that were of a project character, mainly organization culture and core value projects in the organization that she was involved in. Marianne felt frustrated with the lack of influence from her present position. Her organizational commitment was significant, but she felt unable to be heard when it came to ideas about organizational structure etc. Consequently, both Maria and Marianne had started to *de*identfy *from* their present roles, which Ashforth (1998) considers as an important part of the unfreezing/separation phase, even if they had not started to search for other positions.

For all three, the training became a long unfreezing process, where they indirectly and directly elaborated these issues. For Maria it became mainly an arena to deal with the strong emotions that evolved. For Marianne and Christina it became an opportunity for reflection on themselves and their leadership situations. Thereby it constituted a help to figure out what they wanted and thereby it indirectly prepared them for transition.

Lewin (1951) described the unfreezing/separation phase as requiring a lot of energy and it is often connected to vulnerability and a feeling of instability. The unfreezing phase generates the greatest resistance in transition processes in general. The introspective management training offers an arena to deal with this vulnerability. Thus, it could be said to foster receptiveness to change and transition. Participants who work with

"finding themselves" (i.e. starting to separate from their social roles) during training should have less resistance when it comes to initiating a macro role transition. In fact the whole training could be viewed as an unfreezing process, which also explains the strong emotions involved. If the participants already in the training have gone through the painful unfreezing/separation phase they can more freely "choose" if the refreezing/incorporation should be with the old organization or if the moving/transition phase should lead them to another job, another organization or another occupation. Consequently, if the training is "successful" for the participating managers on the personal level, they will also be less resistant to transitions in terms of their jobs[45], which for their organizations might be considered as less "successful".

8.2.2 Moving/transition

The moving/transition phase could be done gradually (Ashforth, 1998). Either the redefinition of the identity could be performed in a specific social settings at first, while the redefinition is not fully realized in other social settings until much later. Maria redefined her identity in the permitting context of the management training and already after the first course week she tried to start her moving/transition. She had experienced a changed view of herself during the course and was determined to make the transition in her working life as well, but she did not succeed when she tried to give expression to her redefinition in her management group. As Ashforth et al. (2000) point out a transition is always harder to perform *within* a social domain and Maria became painfully aware of this fact. Weick (1984) emphasizes the importance of "small wins" to keep the moving/transition phase going, but Maria instead experienced a constant resistance to her attempts to express "who she really was". She continued to fail in the moving/transition phase, as her "social audience" at work did not support the transition (they even went against it – remember the previous quotation *"why are you going to these courses, they only make you strange!"*). Ashforth (1998) argues that positive responses to a beginning moving/transition phase can create snowball effects, but in the case of Maria it had the opposite effect. Being stuck in this state of liminality and "in-between" turned out to be very painful for her. As Ashforth (1998) emphasizes the moving/transition phase will not automatically lead to a refreezing/incorporation phase when the person herself has become comfortable in the role, but that the "social audience"

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[45] Of course this is applicable to other social roles as well that are not work related, such as husband/wife etc, but they are not in focus here.

must also accept it, which was not the case for Maria in her management group.

Marianne's role moving/transition came in two different steps. She was appointed to the management group, which became an extension of her present role as she kept her position as department manager as well. However, this extension meant only more frustration for her. Marianne's perception of her new manager position was not in line with her expectations and she ended up leaving both her organization and her manager job for a specialist job as a veterinarian in another organization. Similarly with Maria, Marianne did not experience any positive response during the early moving/transition phase, and thereby she did not refreeze/incorporate her new role. Instead it started another moving/transition phase that led her away from both her occupation as a manager and her organization.

Christina's transition phase began with her applying for the job as department manager at the department where she was one of the group managers, i.e. one further step up the ladder in relation to her present group manager job. Applying for another job within the organization might serve as a rite of passage (Van Gennep 1909/1960), as it has a strong signalizing effect. Christina signalized for the organization that she wanted something else and thereby showed to the others that she had separated from her present manager job. She did not get the job, so the moving/transition was abruptly rebuffed.

The major strength with Van Gennep's (1909/1960) rite of passage is that it emphasizes the involvement of other people in role transitions (Trice & Morand, 1989). Roles are based on relations (for example it is impossible to be a mother without having a child, it depends on the relations between mother and child) and by applying for a new job in the organization, Christina involved other organizational members in her role transition. As a consequence, her manager made attempts to find projects of investigatory work to compensate her, which could be considered as extensions of her present role rather than a role transition, but she did not find a sufficient challenge in these jobs. After the training she applied for a manager job in another organization, which she got. Her transition thereby became a movement to another organization.

Maria continued to fail in her transition attempts in her organization and the transition started to take another direction. During the end of the training she started to recognize the social patterns that had made her become manager in the first place. She claimed that her sister always had

been the role model of her life, a significant other to use Mead's (1934/1975) terms, which made the manager role preferable to her. Furthermore, she experienced that people around her always had supported her choice of being manager, i.e. her generalized other (Mead, 1934/1975) supported the manager choice. Maria's experience of not having made her choices herself, made her take a radical step and she became a snowboard teacher. When the moving/transition phase means letting go of something you hold very dear, it might be helpful to "over-do" it and take revolutionary steps to signalize both to oneself and others that something is changing. I interpret Maria's role transition as such, as she did not only change her present role, she moved away from both the social system that the organization constituted and the social system that being a manager constituted (Barley, 1989). She later came back to her organization for another manager job, which she was much more satisfied with. The time as a snowboarding teacher had served as a strong signalizer both for herself and her social audience, but rather than a refreezing/incorporation phase it was a step in her transition phase to the new manager job. Transitions are always easier *between* social domains, as the new social audience has no expectations of "how you are" (Ashforth, 1998).

8.2.3 Refreezing/incorporation

The last phase, refreezing/incorporation, means that the individuals have become comfortable and confident in their new role and consider it as reflecting themselves (Ashforth, 1998). Consequently, to understand this phase I would have to follow the managers' experience of their new jobs as well. Unfortunately, that was beyond the time scope of this study, but I met Christina in her new position and I heard from Maria that she was very satisfied in her new position.

Christina's moving/transition phase made her move outside the organization. She incorporated with a manager job in another organization, where she felt she found sufficient challenges and a manager she felt she could learn from. Her experience was that she could continue to develop in that new position and the members of her new organization accepted her. Consequently, the new role had what her old role lacked, which is an important fact of incorporation of a new role (Ashforth, 2001) and the acceptance from the new social audience strengthened her identification with the new role.

Even if Maria was very satisfied with her new role in comparison with the old, she still had doubts regarding the common factor of the roles, i.e. being manager. In that sense she had not fully incorporated the role as she still felt that it did not fully reflect herself (Ashforth, 1998).
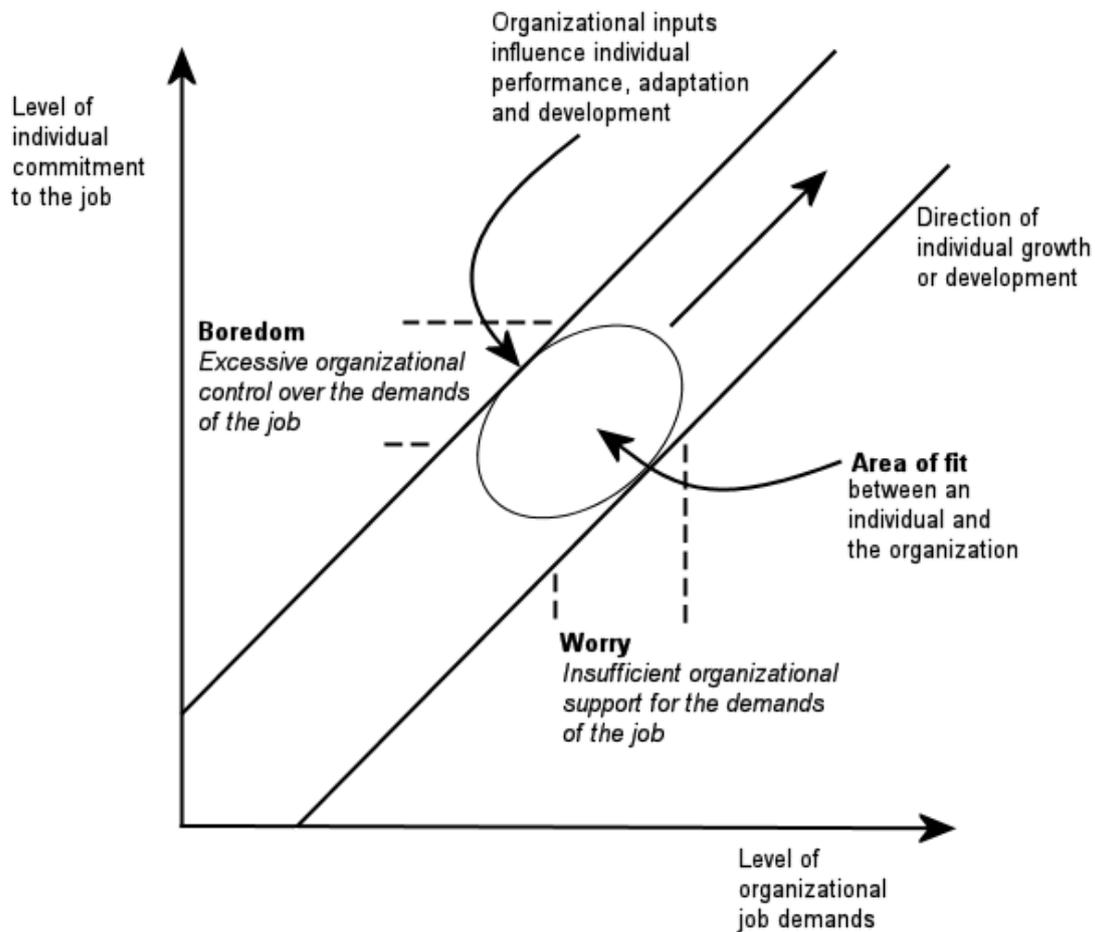
9. PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL INTERACTION

In chapter 2.5 and 3.4 manager was described as a relation between individual and organization. The formal contract defines the formal obligations between the parties, but as Watson (2001) shows the implicit contract between the parties and the situational characteristics are often more important in defining the role of interaction between person and organization. This chapter will take its point of departure in the interaction between the individual managers and their organizations. The first part will discuss the reciprocity at work based on personal and organizational needs, under influence of an introspective management training, which focuses exclusively on personal needs. The second part will discuss to what extent the organizational structure influences the product of the negotiation over long-term, thus how the organizational structure influences careers.

9.1 Personal and organizational needs – reciprocity at work

In the previous chapter the managers' struggle to fit in through different role transitions was described. As this potential fit is a result of a match between the managers' personal development and their organizations' development there is no guarantee that it will last. The fit is also an ongoing process, as the person and the organization are processes as well.

Managers, as any employee, have undoubtedly a relation of some kind to their organizations. What signifies managers' relations is their situation of "being in the middle" (Roethlisberger, 1945), i.e. on the one side they are employees and on the other side they are representatives of the employer (the organization) in relation to their subordinates. Career could be one way of understanding the relation between the individual and the organization over time. The career path is then viewed as the result of the on-going negotiation between the individual and the organization. To develop this further the negotiation could be seen as based on the parties' different needs (Arthur & Kram, 1989), which is illustrated in figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 Individual perspective on individual – organization interaction

Source: Arthur & Kram, 1989, p. 299

An addition to Arthur & Kram's (1989) model is that from an interactionist perspective I view the level of organizational needs as *perceived* by the manager, not an attempt to give an objective picture of the organizational needs. It is the perception that creates the interpretation and actions.

All six managers experienced the training as something positive for them as individuals, but the fact that three of the managers had left their positions less than a year after the training's completion makes the organizational benefits more doubtful. (Actually, the three managers who participated in the program a few years ago and were interviewed about possible long-term effects, had also left their organizations within a year after the training's completion, which results in six of nine managers leaving their organizations within a year.)

Christina, Marianne and Maria who left their organizations all experienced different mismatches with their organizations. Christina felt

that she had learnt as much as she could learn at her present job, already when she went into the training, i.e. a situation where the job challenge was not sufficient considering her level of commitment, to refer to figure 9.1 (Arthur & Kram, 1989). During the training this mismatch became even more evident to her, and she tried both to make changes in her work situation and to find another more challenging manager job in her organization. Despite her efforts she failed, and she decided to leave the organization for another more challenging manager job.

Marianne worked both as a manager and as a specialist (veterinarian). She felt that the demands on her being both a veterinarian and manager were tough and she described it as "*manager is something you are on top of everything else*". Even if her commitment was high, she felt worry and stress that she had not time for both. During the training it became clear for her that she was rather a veterinarian than a manager. Having only one of the affiliations became her way to find a match. However, her long history and identity in the organization made it difficult for her to "take a step back" in her own organization. Instead she left the organization for a specialist, veterinarian job.

Maria experienced a lack of challenge in her job. She felt as "*nothing could happen in my group manager job that I couldn't deal with in my sleep*". To some extent she experienced boredom (referring to figure 9.1) and the training made her realize it and made her want to change her job situation. However, the people around her in the organization did not support this change, but indirectly "pushed" her back to their view of "the area of fit" (referring to figure 9.1) from an organizational perspective. She experienced that she had developed personally and wanted new challenges, but the inability to develop in her present job made her leave her position.

Östen, David and Rikard stayed in their organizations. Östen had a revolutionary personal development during the training, both according to himself and his subordinates. Before the training there was a clear mismatch between him and the organization, but the training made him able to meet the organizational requirements. While in previous examples Maria and Christina experienced a personal development that brought them "ahead of the organizational development" that lead to a mismatch, Östen seemed to be "behind" the organizational development when entering the training. From his personal development during the training he became aware of the organizational requirements of a manager, which enabled him to be in line with the organizational development and the mismatch became a match.

Both David and Rikard had similar situations to Marianne, i.e. they were both specialists and managers. David had felt secure in his role as a veterinarian, but not very confident as a manager. His work situation thereby became stressful to him. The management training made him more self-confident in his managerial role. His experience after the training was that he worked as much as before, but he was less stressed. Consequently, what makes the difference are the *experienced* organizational demands, not the organizational demands in an objective sense. David worked as much as before, but due to his different social construction of the demands he had a different attitude to them. Rikard experienced a personal development that the organization could not match, and he became frustrated. However, he created his own challenges outside his work as a short story writer to compensate for the lack of sufficient challenges at his work place. Consequently, the work place is not the only context where challenges can be met, but as Baum (1990) points out, for most people it is the main area of seeking challenges. However, Rikard constitutes an example of using his spare time to fulfil needs he could not fulfil in his organization.

Evidently, the managers experienced a personal development, but the "direction" of the personal development seemed unpredictable. Their development constituted an empowerment of themselves (Conger, 2001), which could lead in any direction. Consequently, it is very difficult to predict the outcome or result of introspective management training. Organizations' own in-house trainings often mean socialization, which signifies that the managers more or less are formed in a unitary way. Introspective management training with "free personal development" and "true empowerment" could in other words be viewed as an opposite to the in-house training, which to be frank means "personal limitation" as a certain role is imposed on them. Identity control is thereby used as a form of organizational control (Alvesson & Willmoth, 2002) in such in-house training. However, all organizational life to some extent means "lock-in" effects, i.e. as an organizational member you subordinate yourself to the organizational goals. The "lock-in" effects would probably be even more evident for managers than for organizational members in general, as managers serve as representatives for the organization in relation to their subordinates, but also to a larger extent represent the organization externally. Consequently, a reasonable question is whether organizations need "fully empowered" people, as it seems opposite to the logic of organizing.

However, it is rather obvious that the managers' themselves experience that they bring with them a new potential from the training (language, self-confidence in the leader role, reflection, awareness, calmness etc), but it is not self-evident that this experienced potential automatically transforms into organizational influences. Rather this study makes it seem doubtful if there are any organizational influences at all. King & Nicol (1999) argue that on an organizational level there must be an understanding of the potential the managers bring with them and also an understanding that it requires commitment from them to realize this potential to gain from the managers' personal development. Consequently, another reasonable question would be whether organizations are able and willing to take care of the managers' personal development.

The answer is probably somewhere in between. In all cases there was a lack of strategy from an organizational point of view for taking care of the eventual personal development. Even if Alpha had good intentions and bought a short variant of the training to all their department managers the actions were not based on reciprocity. The training was bought to fulfil organizational needs. There seemed to be a belief that the eventual effect of the training automatically transforms to organizational effects without any demands on the organization, which also was a view that indirectly was encouraged by the organizer of the management training. Consequently, there is a lack of reciprocity in the relation. There are no efforts from an organizational viewpoint to understand the managers' experienced personal development and to try to match it with organizational needs and requirements. Maybe organizations do not need fully empowered people, but then there must also be an ongoing conversation between person and organization representatives during the training, which aims at understanding the personal development and its consequences for the organization.

Furthermore, some organizations seemed not to expect any organizational effects of the training. Instead, they seemed to consider the training as an individual reward, rather than something generated by organizational needs. Kanter (1983) argued already in the 1980s that trainings of different kinds in the future would be the organization's way to compensate the individuals for not being able to provide them opportunities of a life-long career in the organization. It seems like the future she predicted is here.

As a last word it could be worthwhile to question Arthur & Kram's (1989) harmonious view of the interaction between individual and

organization (figure 9.1). The study makes it evident that an experienced misfit can create actions that lead to development. Consequently, harmony is not the single solution, but an accepted tension can be very fruitful as well.

9.2 Personal career and organizational structure

Personal career has been described as the result of an ongoing negotiation between the individual and the organization (Hall, 1976; Kotter et. Al, 1978), and over time it can be conceptualized as a series of transitions from one role to another within an organizational or occupational social system (Barley, 1989).

To put it simply, there are three possible outcomes if there is a fit between the parties at the beginning and the individual experiences a personal development from the introspective management training:
- The experienced personal development is matched by an organizational development, i.e. the managers can continue "to grow with their organizations" and remain at the same position as before the training.
- The managers' personal development makes them require more of their organizations, which is not possible in their present positions. However, there are other opportunities within the organization and they change positions. Thus, their career paths continue within the organization, but it will probably require some efforts from an organizational point of view.
- The managers' personal development makes them require more of their organizations, but it is not possible for the organization to match, neither in the managers' present positions nor in other positions in the organization. Thus, the negotiation does not end in an acceptable solution for the manager, and the risk that the career path will continue in another organization is considerable.

The above-mentioned three situations represent two situations of fit (one with and one without organizational efforts) and one situation of misfit. The three situations described could be seen as different characteristics of a career path. Firstly, there is the daily relation between individual and organization, i.e. small changes in a position dealt with through negotiation without necessarily having to be formalized. Secondly, there are role transitions within an organization, and thirdly role transitions between organizations. All of these have been dealt with in previous

chapters, but the influence of the situational characteristic that the formal structure in the organization constitutes has not yet been discussed.

The six participating managers represent different aspects of career paths. During the studied period of 20 months, three managers remained in their positions (Rikard, David and Östen), one manager changed position within the organization (Maria), and two managers left both their positions and their organizations (Marianne and Christina).

The three veterinarians' (Rikard, David and Marianne) career paths were influenced by the fact that they were both veterinarians and managers. It meant that they had two different careers, and the relation between the two careers was not that clear. The career as a veterinarian (professional worker) was maintained mainly through publications in scientific journals and was thereby very similar to a career as a researcher in the academic world. The manager career on the other hand meant requiring positions with more responsibility and influence, in other words "climbing the ladder" as in most manager careers.

The complication for the veterinarians was that the best veterinarians were promoted to managers, and the "promotion" slowed down their research careers as they had less time for research and publications. Consequently, the career as veterinarian (researcher) was loosely related to the organization, in fact it could hardly be called a negotiation between individual and organization. The managerial career, on the other hand, was tightly related to the organization and had aspects of negotiation between individual and organization. However, the careers were linked to each other indirectly in different ways. One is the mentioned relation that the best veterinarians became managers and thereby slow down the researcher career. Another is based on the fact that the managers to a large extent are managing other professional workers, who also are performing careers by scientific publications. The complexity of that could be exemplified by the subordinate to Marianne, who did not want to become associate professor before Marianne. She felt it was not "fair" as Marianne as manager did so much for her, and thereby she felt indirectly responsible for the situation that Marianne did not have sufficient time for research.

Marianne herself complained that what she did as a manager was not visible, while what she did as a researcher in the form of publications was very visible and measurable. The publications meant a research career, while managerial duties did not have the same outcome. Chandler's (1977) classic argument that the visibility of manager careers was one

significant driving force of the growth in the Western economy stated the opposite, i.e. that manager careers in the form of "climbing the ladder" were more visible than careers in non-managerial positions. However, Chandler's (1977) writing was performed before the hype of flat organizations (influenced by Carlzon (1985) among others), which has had a significant influence. In this case, the organizational structure in Alpha in some sense makes it impossible to have a manager career in terms of climbing the ladder. The aims to have a flat organizational structure provided no ladder to climb in Alpha. The government appoints the general director at the top and the next step in the hierarchy is the department managers, which is the position of all three managers from Alpha in this study. Department manager is the only managerial level except the general director. Thus, there is only one step to take, and then you are in a dead end career-wise (concerning manager career). Chandler's (1977) argument regarding visible manager careers does not seem as strong in a time of less hierarchical levels. Flat organizations have become a buzzword today and most organizations prefer to see themselves as flat and non-hierarchical[46]. However, this study shows that the downside with the flat organization is a lack of possibilities for a manager career in terms of climbing the ladder.

Delta constitutes an interesting contrast as it has a very visible and homogeneous formal structure, which means that the career path is very visible and in a sense predestined. However, there are other problems as in the case of Christina, who experienced that "her next step" was blocked as another person got the appointment she was aspiring for. As she wanted to "take the next step in her career" and there was no opening, there was no other way then to leave her organization. In other words the formal (almost rigid) organizational structure made the organization less "negotiable" when it came to Christina's career.

An advantage with a visible hierarchy and thereby a clear career path is that it is *visible from the outside*. Climbing the ladder means that other people, both inside and outside the organization, can see that you are making a career. While in a flat organization, there might be informal career paths and some manager positions might be seen as "higher" despite being on the same hierarchical level. In Alpha, Rikard described how the training had made him think about the next step in his manager career and he had decided to apply for another position as department manager. For an outsider, this would probably be perceived as a lateral

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[46] Flat and non-hierarchical organizations are especially well perceived in Sweden, as they match the cultural values regarding work (compare Hofstede, 1980) as well as the Swedish management style (Jönsson, 1995)

step and no career step, while Rikard meant that it was a step towards more influence. Consequently, non-hierarchical organizations lack the visibility for outsiders when it comes to manager career, but it does not mean that there are no career paths for managers in flat organizations. However, the fact that it requires an insider to know about them means that they have much less signalizing effects.

The rites of passages (Van Gennep, 1909/1960) in manager career are not as evident in an organization with a flat organization structure as in a hierarchical organization. Thereby, there is less involvement of others as social audience in the manager career in a flat organization, which makes it less "visible". Especially in organizations with professional workers there might be several different career logics, which can be conflicting. From an organizational viewpoint it should be a worthwhile effort to try to make manager career consistent with other careers as well, if professional workers are wanted in manager positions.

The strongest direction in career theory right now is the emphasis on *subjective* career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), i.e. that an individual creates and shapes his/her career based upon what they value in life. I agree with this view, but I think when it comes to managers you should not underestimate the impact of management discourse when it comes to how "free" this choice is. For example, Östen came to the conclusion after the training that he did not want to have a manager career. He was satisfied in his present manager position as that position meant a direct coaching leadership style, while another step in the hierarchy would mean another leadership style. He stated that for the first time in his life he had understood that he did not *have to* make a manager career once he had become a manager. He had experienced that as soon you had a manager job, you were expected to make a managerial career – to climb the ladder. Consequently, his experiences of what other people expected from him nearly made him take a career step that he did not want to take, which shows how strong the impact of the discourse and the perceptions of others are on our decisions and actions. As Barley (1989) suggests, drawing on the interactionist perspective, we are both creators of and created by society. The experienced pressure Östen felt regarding making a manager career constitutes an example of society as creator, but the fact that Östen changed his mind shows that the generalized other (Mead, 1934/1975) can also change, as we are the creators of the generalized other ourselves, and thereby the creators of society. However, to have a "true subjective career" (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) as a manager, you might have to "go against" management discourse.

10. CONCLUSION

How do you know that there is an existential self? And if there is one, how do you know that your existential self is a manager? Indirectly, these questions created confusion for the managers during the training. The self is a collection of incompletely integrated identities. The inconsistency can be dealt with by partly clustering consistent identities, partly by interpreting any one identity with consciousness to the others (March, 1994).

For the managers in the study, the introspective training was mainly an arena for identity work. However, *identity work meant dealing with conflicting identities, elaborating and developing identities and roles, and struggling to fit into different discourses, rather than finding the true self.* Some of the conflicts between different identities have their roots in the different discourses. Discourses and cultures serve as providers of "identity-templates", and for example the discursive identity of veterinarians is to some extent based on alterity to managers, which makes it harder for a veterinarian to create an identity as a manager. The identity process is complex and is influenced both by direct interaction with others "here-and-now" and by the generalized other, which goes beyond "here-and-now", as it could be seen as "the voice of the discourse" creating expectations and a social memory based on previous experiences.

The thesis is based upon the view that there are no exceptions to the view of the human being as always in a process of "becoming", humans are continually changing, adapting and learning. Thus, the introspective management training influences an already existing "becoming" process manifested in an identity process. It does not start an identity process; it influences "the overall becoming process" and pre-existing identity processes. Consequently, the managers' personal life stories were largely influential on the result and the experience of the introspective management training, which in turn meant that very personal stories were created from participating in the training.

As the training mainly served as an arena for identity work and role elaboration, it seemed to work as a catalyst for self-redefinition. However, it also served as a provider of a manager role based upon the personal growth discourse. Depending on to what extent the managers identified with the provided role it became a part of their identity.

My notion that the management training served as a provider of a manager role is inconsistent with the rhetoric of the training where one of their points of departure is that they are *not* imposing a certain role. Instead they are helping the participating managers to find themselves and from that develop their *personal* and *unique* leadership, i.e. the argument is that it is a "free development". However, the development is only "free" as long as it is in line with personal growth discourse (not controlling, but coaching; not pushing, but facilitating; not directing, but involving).

The strength with the provided manager role was that it became a complement and alterative to the managers' already established manager roles. The training served as an arena to elaborate and experiment with this role, but it also helped the participants to relate the role to other manager roles. Furthermore, the role elaboration seemed to have the potential to help managers to "unlock" strong identifications with certain roles. Strong identifications with certain roles, i.e. the role identity is a central part of the manager's conceptualizing of the self, make role transitions harder. Consequently, the training had the ability to facilitate role transitions.

I consider identity work and role transitions as important parts of management. Management is to a large extent about relating to other people and both identities and roles have strong relational aspects. Consequently, identity work and role elaboration is thereby indirectly management development as it means working with relations.

On the personal level the introspective management training seems to have a lot to offer the managers, mainly as it serves as an arena for identity work and role elaboration, which might be part of management that is seldom consciously developed. Furthermore, as the role elaboration has the potential to facilitate role transitions it can also help the managers in their struggles to fit different discourses and different settings. Role transitions are an important part of managers' everyday life, and the ability to deal with frequent role transitions is seen as an ability that becomes more and more important in organizational life (Ashforth, 1998; Ashforth et al. 2000; Ashforth, 2001; Zaleznik, 1989). Thus, introspective management training seem to have a great potential for managers, but repeatedly it tends to stumble on its most fundamental belief – the existential view of the self – as it tends to create a one-dimensionality through its search for " the true self" and an unwillingness to deal with multiple and contradictory identities and roles. The rhetorical one-dimensionality creates confusion for the managers and might actually

make role transitions more difficult, as it gives the managers a guilty conscience when they are using manager roles that are not in line with the personal growth discourse (despite the fact that these roles might perfectly fit the situation they are in) and that it might strengthen certain role identities at the expense of others in the search for "the one and true that I am".

The introspective management training seems to have potential on the personal level for the managers, but the fact that three of six (or six of nine including the managers from previous years) managers left their positions within a year after having completed the training makes the organizational potential more doubtful. Introspective management training does focus on personal development and if the training is successful it might have the effect that the manager leaves the organization if there is no attempt from the organization to meet this development. The question is whether there is an understanding of this within companies and other organizations that send managers to introspective management training. To ensure the maximal outcomes for the organization, there is a need for organizational commitment regarding preparation work before the training and integration work after the training together with an attempt to understand the managers' personal processes during the training. Without this reciprocity the organizations' gain from their managers' participation in introspective management training is doubtful. On the other hand, with such a commitment and reciprocity there might be a better result of this type of management training than of general management training.

Introspective management training means that two different discourses meet, but it is not self-evident that they merge or are easily integrated. Conger (2001) called for research on the possible clashes between the logic of management discourse and personal growth discourse with the notion that they had not been fully investigated empirically. Firstly, the goal to find the power and the passion within - why should this be connected to management? This study shows that the connection is not self-evident. Some of the managers did embrace their manager jobs with more enthusiasm after the training, but there are also examples of managers who actually decided to leave their manager jobs. Furthermore, one manager started to write short stories (as a hobby besides his manager job, but still as a way to express his passion within). Thus, the passion within might be related to management, or it might not, but the connection is not self-evident. However, the introspective management training seems to serve as a help for the managers to find balance in their

223

personal life, whether it is through developing their manager roles, quitting their manager jobs or writing short stories.

Secondly, do organizations need and benefit from "empowered people" who follow "their inner self"? Organizational life always means to some extent subordinate to other collective goals that are not self-evidently fully consistent with individual goals. Managers are aligned to their organizations' goals, otherwise they can not perform their jobs, whether is consistent with their personal goals or not.

The study raises the question whether organizations must be better at taking care of and understanding the managers' personal development or if they simply do not benefit from "fully empowered" people who follow "their inner self". The answer probably lies somewhere in the middle. Maybe organizations do not need fully empowered people, but then there must be an ongoing conversation between person and organization representatives during the training, which aims at *reciprocity*, i.e. from an organizational viewpoint to understand the personal development and its possible consequences for the organization and from the managers' viewpoint to understand organizational requirements and needs.

Furthermore, what is the role of introspective management training "in the bigger picture", i.e. on a macro level? Kunda & Ailon-Souday (2005) argue that there has never been such a pure rationalism as now. When the attention to organization culture faded away in the 1990s it was replaced by market rationalism. The organization culture era meant an attempt to get the members of the organization to identify with the organization by normative control. Nowadays, with trends such as outsourcing, networking, temporary workers etc market rationalism rules. Building strong cultures, which keep people close to organizations, has thereby become obsolete. We live in an individualized market economy. Individuals come and go, which makes it impossible to perform normative control. Instead the controlling mechanisms are extremely technical.

Despite the strong humanistic rhetoric of the introspective management training I have studied, they actually could be viewed as one possible key player in the market rationalism era and thereby support a purely technical form of control, which is opposite to the form of control they emphasize in their training. They are involved with personal development rather than organizational development, which means that they indirectly support increased individuality and the individual quest for employability. Furthermore, they facilitate role transitions, which also support market

rationalism with a free float of people. The introspective management training might represent the future, but perhaps not the humanistic future with "enlightened people" as it is claimed, but a future with strong market rationalism and individualism.

O'Hara & Anderson (1995) argue that postmodernity does not mean that we have left the modern era behind. It is all around us and within us, and especially management discourse is dominated by modern, rational thought. Most of us slip back and forth like bilingual children between postmodern, constructivist modes of thought in which we regard reality as socially constructed, and modern, objectivist modes of thought in which we regard reality as something that is nonhuman yet *known* with unshakable certainty through some approach to truth. We cling to the hope that one or another of these approaches will explain everything to us. The introspective management training responds to that hope in its rhetoric, by offering less confusion: Find your inner self and listen to it, and you will have your one logic, your one identity, without confusion.

However, Anderson (1995a) claims that merely one logic is not sufficient. Even becoming a postmodernist will not be the key to success and survival in the postmodern world, rather the ability to be *multilingual*. The functioning person in the postmodern world needs to be able to think rationally and understand science, as well as to be able to appreciate and draw on the social heritage, but also to seek power from spiritual feelings that neo-romanticism offers.

Introspective management training might have something to offer to managers heavily rooted in a rational/scientific-dominated management discourse when it comes to incorporate what neo-romanticism brings. However, it might as well fail to support postmodern managers because of its most fundamental belief - the "stay-the-course"-personality that the view of an inner, true self involves. The "stay-the-course"-personality seems to be the least successful way for people in general, but for managers in particular, to cope with postmodernity. As Gergen (1991:155) puts it: "*Identities are highly complex, tension filled, contradictory, and inconsistent entities. Only the one who claims to have a simple, definite, and clear-cut identity has an identity problem.*"

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Empirical material

The participants in the program are marked in italics and bold and participants from earlier programs are marked in italics.

Date	Time	Place	Interviewee	Interview/ Observation
2002-09-11	15.00 – 17.45	Sky Institute	Stefan Wetterholm, Manager, Lelle Cryssanthander, Leadership trainer	Interview
2002-09-19	14.30 – 15.30	My office	Jivan Wells, Leadership trainer, responsible for Existential Leadership	Telephone interview
2002-10-01	16.00 – 17.30	Delta	Administrative manager	Interview
2002-10-03	14.00 – 14.45	Alpha	***Rikard***, department manager	Interview
2002-10-03	14.45 – 15.30	Alpha	***David***, department manager	Interview
2002-10-03	15.30 – 16.15	Alpha	***Rikard, David, Marianne***	Observation
2002-10-03	16.15 – 17.30	Alpha	***Marianne***, department manager	Interview
2002-10-07	14.30 – 15.45	Delta	***Christina***, group manager	Interview
2002-10-30	9.20 – 10.45	Gamma	***Maria***, group manager	Interview
2002-11-11	9.00 – 10.30	Alpha	Veterinarian, subordinated to Marianne	Interview
2002-11-11	14.00 – 15.30	Alpha	Department meeting: ***Marianne*** + six others	Observation
2002-11-11	15.30 – 17.00	Alpha	Staff manager	Interview
2002-11-12	8.30 – 9.30	Alpha	Department manager, peer to David, Marianne and Rikard	Interview
2002-11-12	10.00 – 11.00	Alpha	Secretary and market assistant, subordinate to Marianne	Interview
2002-11-12	14.00 – 15.15	Alpha	Marketing manager, peer to David, Marianne and Rikard	Interview
2002-11-12	15.15 – 17.00	Alpha	***Marianne***	Interview
2002-11-18	9.30 – 11.15	Alpha	Performance appraisal interview, ***David*** and a subordinated section manager	Observation
2002-11-18	11.15 – 12.00	Alpha	Meeting, ***David*** + people from his and another department	Observation
2002-11-18	12.15 – 14.15	Alpha	***David***	Interview
2002-11-20	10.00 – 11.30	Beta	***Östen***, manager staff training	Interview
2002-11-26	8.00 – 9.30	Delta	***Christina***	Interview
2002-12-12	9.00 – 10.00	Alpha	Department meeting, Rikard and his subordinates	Observation
2002-12-12	10.00 – 11.30	Alpha	BMA, subordinated to Rikard	Interview
2002-12-12	12.15 – 13.00	Alpha	Department manager, peer to David, Marianne and Rikard	Interview
2002-12-12	13.15 – 14.15	Alpha	BMA, subordinated to Rikard	Interview

2002-12-12	15.00 – 16.00	Alpha	Veterinarian, subordinated to Rikard	Interview
2002-12-12	16.00 – 17.30	Alpha	***Rikard***	Interview
2002-12-13	10.00 – 15.00	Sky Institute	Stefan Wetterholm, Leadership trainer and manager	Interview
2002-12-13	10.00 – 15.00	Sky	Jivan Wells, Leadership trainer	Interview
2002-12-17	10.00 – 10.45	Beta	Staff trainer, subordinated to Östen	Interview
2002-12-17	11.00 – 12.00	Beta	Staff trainer, subordinated to Östen	Interview
2002-12-17	13.00 – 14.00	Beta	Östen's manager	Interview
2002-12-20	9.30 – 10.45	Delta	Administrative manager	Interview
2003-01-10	13.00 – 14.30	Alpha	General Director	Interview
2003-01-10	14.30 – 16.00	Alpha	Planning Director	Interview
2003-02-20	14.00 – 15.00	Alpha	Secretary, subordinated to David	Interview
2003-02-20	15.00 – 16.00	Alpha	Veterinarian, subordinated to David	Interview
2003-02-21	8.30 – 10.00	Alpha	Veterinarian, subordinated to David	Interview
2003-02-21	10.00 – 11.30	Alpha	***David***	Interview
2003-02-21	13.30 – 16.00	Alpha	***Marianne***	Interview
2003-03-19	9.00 – 12.30	Sky	Lelle Cryssanthander,	Interview
2003-04-04	10.00 – 11.00	Beta	Staff manager	Interview
2003-04-04	13.00 – 14.00	Beta	***Östen***	Interview
2003-04-07	9.00 – 10.30	Alpha	***Marianne***	Interview
2003-04-07	10.30 – 12.30	Alpha	***Rikard***	Interview
2003-04-09	8.00 – 21.00	Sky Institute	Lelle Cryssantander, Jivan Wells	Participating observation
2003-04-10	8.00 – 21.00	Sky Institute	Lelle Cryssantander, Jivan Wells	Participating observation
2003-04-11	8.00 – 14.00	Sky Institute	Lelle Cryssantander, Jivan Wells	Participating observation
2003-05-05	10.00 – 12.00	His office	*Niklas*, deputy manager	Interview
2003-05-13	18.00 – 20.00	Café	Stefan Wetterholm	Interview
2003-05-14	8.00 – 21.00	Sky Institute	Lelle Cryssantander, Jivan Wells	Participating observation
2003-05-15	8.00 – 21.00	Sky Institute	Lelle Cryssantander, Jivan Wells	Participating observation
2003-05-16	8.00 – 14.00	Sky Institute	Lelle Cryssantander, Jivan Wells	Participating observation
2003-06-23	15.00 – 17.00	His office	*Ingemar*, manager	Interview
2003-07-01	10.00 – 12.00	Her office	*Kerstin*, managing director	Interview
2003-07-02	13.00 – 15.00	Gamma	***Maria***	Interview
2003-10-23	15.00 – 17.00	Alpha	***Marianne***	Interview
2003-10-24	8.15 – 11.00	Alpha	***Rikard***	Interview

2003-10-24	13.00 – 14.15	Alpha	Staff manager	Interview
2003-11-18	9.00 – 9.30	Beta	Staff trainer, subordinated to Östen	Interview
2003-11-18	9.30 – 10.00	Beta	Staff trainer, subordinated to Östen	Interview
2003-12-01	8.00 – 9.30	Sky	Lelle Cryssanthander	Interview
2003-12-01	10.30 – 11.00	Sky	Stefan Wetterholm	Interview
2003-12-02	8.30 – 9.30	Alpha	Veterinarian, subordinated to David	Interview
2003-12-02	11.00 – 11.45	Alpha	Market manager, peer to David, Marianne and Rikard	Interview
2003-12-02	11.45 – 12.15	Alpha	Veterinarian, subordinated to David	Interview
2003-12-02	12.15 – 14.15	Alpha	*David*	Interview
2003-12-17	9.30 – 10.30	Delta	Project leader, subordinated to Christina	Interview
2004-01-08	14.00 – 15.00	Delta	Team leader, subordinated to Christina	Interview
2004-01-21	10.30 – 11.45	Delta	*Christina*	Interview
2004-02-13	11.00 – 12.15	Beta	*Östen*	Interview
2004-08-05	13.15 – 13.30	My office	*Maria*	Telephone interview