

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPING RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITHIN THE LITERATURE DOMAIN OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION

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Purpose: The main aim of this paper is to show how problematization can be used based on selected research whose assumptions are to be discussed. In addition to this, the paper aims to formulate views as to what aspects are to be taken into account when looking for new research questions by the application of the dialectical approach.

Design/methodology/approach: Assumptions of selected research are to be analyzed and when it turns out to be justified attempts are made to outline how analyses under consideration can be developed further.

Findings: As a result of concern about the lack of generations of more influential theories in the field of management science, problematization was proposed as a methodology whose aim is to help researchers not only identify but also challenge assumptions on which their conclusions are based. The paper includes considerations for propositions of how problematization can be applied to studies on organizational identity and identification. When possible and justified, propositions of some extensions based on problematization logic are developed.

Originality/value: Whereas problematization has already been applied to generating research questions in general, and to organizational identity and identification studies in particular, further analyses of what new aspects of those studies can be scrutinized deserve further attention and in this paper, by paying attention to this field the author attempts to make the initial contribution in this direction.

Keywords: problematization, dialectical approach, organizational identity, identification.

Category of the paper: conceptual paper.

1. Introduction

When looking for a chance to prepare an influential theory, one should take into account what McKinley, Mone, and Moon (1999) argued with regard to when the theory can become interesting for other researchers. A theory like this actually should "deny taken-for-granted assumptions of their scholarly audiences" (McKinley, Mone, Moon, 1999, p. 636). The core of

the problem is that the conditions that should be met by the theory, which is aimed at receiving attention, is that it should simultaneously be connected to established literature and it should differ significantly from it. Hence, theory needs to be characterized by “novelty and continuity” (McKinley, Mone, Moon, 1999, p. 637). What is important, there should be a “dynamic tension and interplay between novelty and continuity” in such a way that neither novelty nor continuity should dominate (McKinley, Mone, Moon, 1999, p. 637). Actually, the issue appears to be somewhat similar to the one described by the optimal distinctiveness concept proposed by Brewer (1991) who argued that when identifying with a social group, individuals need to be similar to a chosen reference group and, at the same time, they need to be sufficiently distinctive from this reference group – the group is believed to balance best their opposing needs (Gioia, Hamilton, 2016; Ravasi, Rekom, 2003). Hence, assuming that the issue for theory relates to “similarities and differences at the same time” (Ravasi, van Rekom, 2003, p. 127) as well, the question may arise as to how one can recognize and define these similarities or differences to be more effective when attempting to propose new research topics. The main idea behind the proposition presented by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) is that researchers are not able to problematize the current literature by simply extending it. As a result, the next efforts put into filling a given gap in the literature finally tend to reinforce existing theories instead of challenging them. Here, problematization can be understood as an alternative to identifying the gap in the literature as it is considered the way to find research areas based on reaching for the roots of a given idea or conception (Lenart-Gansiniec, 2021). When applying the problematization methodology not only should other stances and the selected domain of literature be dialectically interrogated, but also the researcher's familiar position is to be revised in this way. Hence, researchers are encouraged to use not only their favorite theoretical position. Some reflections on what types of issues can be taken into account when applying this methodology are developed in the following paragraphs.

2. Theoretical background

Lenart-Gansiniec (2021, p. 15) indicates three possible ways to choose an interesting research field. These are the researcher's interest, identification of the gap in the literature as well as problematization. Here, it can be added that identity and identification research although well past its infancy was described as having many open issues for theory construction or empirical research (Ravasi, van Rekom, 2003). They included intellectual sources or matters related to the conceptualization of the construct and remain still current and important (Knorr, Hein-Pensel, 2024). This may be why when making comparisons between problematization and ways of generating research questions focused on identifying gaps in existing literature, Alvesson and Sandberg (2011, p. 260) paid attention to papers within the domain of “identity

constructions in organizations". When presenting their view on problematization methodology, Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) described different types of assumptions that are open for problematization. Having them defined, it should be easier for researchers to look for differences in their approach with comparison to other approaches as well as to have it more clear what is the extent to which their approaches can be assessed as demanding and possibly difficult to understand by other researchers. Among assumptions open for problematization, Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) mention: in-house assumptions (shared by advocates of a given school of thought, e.g. leadership conceptualized as a set of specific attributes – Yukl, 2006 as cited in Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 254); root metaphor assumptions (not limited to a particular school of thought but extended to broader images of a particular subject matter, e.g. organizations seen as "cultures" in terms of beliefs shared by organization members – Morgan, 1997 as cited in Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 255); paradigmatic assumptions (refer to ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions that underlie given ideas, e.g. application of an interpretive approach to a problem previously not analyzed from such point of view – Sandberg, 2000 as cited in Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 255); ideology assumptions (refer to political assumptions, moral assumptions or gender-related assumptions; may involve formulating the same question in another way, e.g. researcher is interested in the reasons behind people motivation in a situation when people experience their work in a positive way – Sievers, 1986 as cited in Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 255); field assumptions (refer to a broader set of assumptions related to a given subject matter; in contrast to in-house assumptions these ones are shared by more than one school of thoughts or even across paradigms and disciplines, Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 256). What is also to be emphasized is that before one wants to develop alternative assumptions, one should identify, articulate, and evaluate assumptions of a selected domain (Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 256).¹ An example of applying problematization methodology to the organizational identity field of the research is the work done by Kreiner et al. (2015) who tried to problematize the literature based on a dialectical approach. Before their approach to problematization is to be analyzed (for a general discussion on the importance of the concept of the elasticity of organizational identity see Janiszewski, 2023a), some introduction to a dialectical approach is presented.

Although Mumby (2004) does not focus on organizational identity research, his approach to dialectical analysis turns out to be useful for organizational identity researchers as well. Mumby (2004) pays his attention to a dialectical approach wanting to emphasize that it is better to treat control and resistance as mutually constitutive and not through the prism of implicit dualism. This is because the latter approach leads to that there is a tendency among researchers to privilege either organizational control processes (here worker's resistance is to be interpreted as rather ineffectual when being analyzed from the point of view of its impact on transformation of everyday relations of power) or employee's resistance to mechanisms of control (here employee' efforts can be in someway "romanticized" [Mumby, 2004, p. 21] as organizational control efforts turn out to be forceless when being confronted with these efforts).

In addition to Adorno's negative dialectics (as being against grand synthesis - Adorno, 1973 as cited in Mumby, 2004, p. 22), when discussing his approach to dialectical analysis Mumby (2004) admits to being influenced by Benson's approach². This approach emphasized the issue of dereification (Benson, 1977 as cited in Mumby, 2004, p. 38), which relates to the fact that each practice can be characterized to some extent as arbitrary. According to Mumby (2004) when wanting to catch the production of complex and possibly contradictory dynamics of control and resistance through their intersection, acts of both - obeisance to power and covert resistance to power – should be included. As presented by Mumby (2004) the main feature of a dialectical perspective applied to his field of research is that the dynamics of control and resistance are said to unfold under discursive conditions.³ It would be interesting to think about this kind of assumption when thinking about a widely spread approach to organizational identity study in case of which “organizational identity is specified as the central and enduring attributes of an organization that distinguishes it from other organizations” (Whetten, 2006, p. 220).

When discussing the development of a dialectical approach Mumby (2004) emphasizes that some thinkers were in favor of looking for a resolution of contradictions and gaining transcendent knowledge (e.g. Lukács), while other thinkers argued that tensions and contradictions should be maintained because then critical reflection and praxis should be possible (e.g. Adorno)⁴. Here, it can be added that when discussing the relation between trust and control, in order to explain a duality perspective Möllering (2005) also compares it with framing trust and control as a dualism. According to him a task for researchers involves looking for "various connections between two distinct concepts" (Möllering, 2005, p. 284). By referring to philosophical debates, Möllering emphasizes that whereas thinking about humans having "a body on the one hand and a soul on the other" is in line with the definition of dualism, thinking about the body needing a soul and vice versa as a condition to be met to be human, is in line with a duality (Möllering, 2005, p. 284). From the point of view presented in the following considerations on organizational identity and identification, it could be emphasized that focusing too much on either side of conflicting views on how it is possible to perceive or categorize themselves as members of the organization (what is actually a common concern for researchers on organizational identity and identification - Ravasi, van Rekom, 2003), has to lead to the situation when the group of strongly disagreeing organizational members emerges. In order to avoid threatening the existence of the organization, another approach to dealing with contradictions is to be more suitable. This is described by Kreiner et al. (2015) whose views on dialectical approach are analyzed in the following paragraph.

3. Discussion

3.1. Dialectical approach and the construct of organizational identity elasticity

In Kreiner et al.'s study (2015) the emphasis is put on identity elasticity, which refers to stretches and contractions of identity dualities. Opposite views formulated by organizational members are to be held even indefinitely in the tensions and they lead to those identity dualities. Those tensions are to produce the above-mentioned stretches that are unbalanced and unequal but persistent. According to this approach, for the organization to avoid being fragmented into new organizations or groups there is no necessity to resolve the disequilibrium, however, the disequilibrium "must be attended to creatively in an ongoing tension" (Kreiner et al., 2015, p. 994). What is interesting from the point of view of the current paper is Kreiner et al.'s discussion (2015) on the term *organizational identity elasticity* through the prism of dialectic tensions (including centrality dialectic, endurance dialectic, distinctiveness dialectic). Below in Figure 1 one of these tensions is analyzed as well as some further details as to how the dialectical approach can be used are given and interpreted.

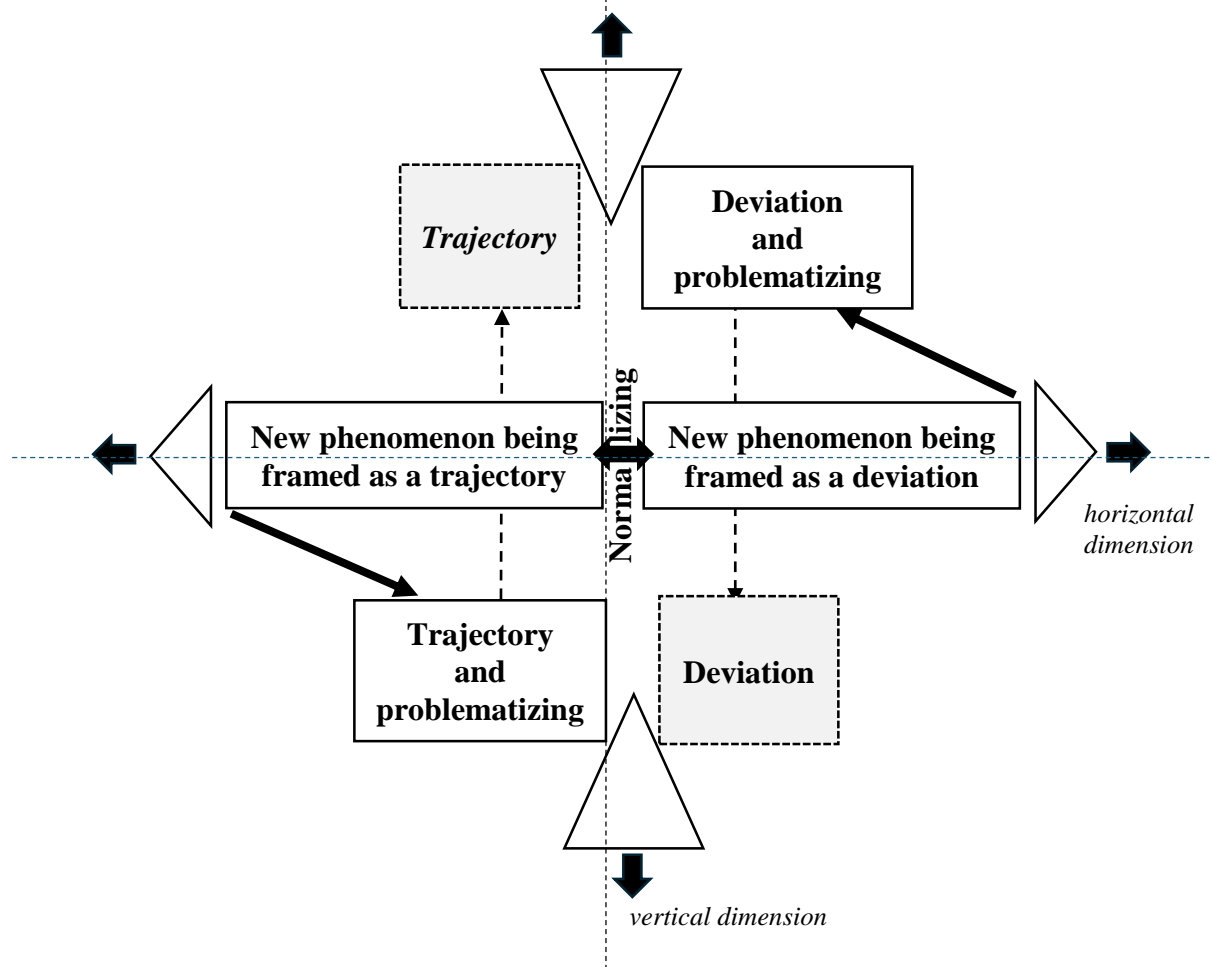


Figure 1. Interpretation of identity elasticity concept based on endurance dialectic.

Source: Author's own based on Kreiner et al. (2015); Smith, Lewis (2011); Mumby (2004).

The presentation of the proposition on how the endurance dialectic may be interpreted is made regarding both Kreiner et al.'s notion (2015), which instead of being focused on the Hegelian synthetic view is focused on "negotiable interplay" among dualities (Kreiner et al., 2015, p. 994), and Smith and Lewis' proposition (2011) of dynamic equilibrium model. In the case of Smith and Lewis' model, the focus is on ensuring simultaneous attention to alternatives when remaining aware of the contradiction between alternatives and the need to have decisions frequently shifted. The need results from "purposeful iterations between alternatives" (Smith, Lewis, 2011, p. 392). Below there are some propositions related to how further conclusions about identity elasticity can be drawn when taking into consideration the above-mentioned views related to the "negotiable interplay" and dynamic equilibrium model.

To start with, it is good to say that when speaking about the traditional synthetic view of dialectics it is not possible to avoid solving conflicting issues in a way that leads to the increasing demand for an opposed force. Hence, when one is to assess whether something new that happens is a kind of continuation of the past or it should be seen as being impossible to couple to what was done successfully in the past, even when one attempts to synthesize opposing views, the final synthesis is to be based primarily on the first worldview or on the second worldview (like the worldview of trajectory in Figure 1 or the worldview of deviation in Figure 1, which means that the present situation may be viewed through the prism of continuity or discontinuity, respectively). That is why e.g. when the worldview of deviation begins to outweigh the second one and those organizational members who are in favor of this second one may feel that their voice is marginalized, the need to find the next solution emerges and the process of searching for this solution is to start. The whole cycle is to be repeated again and again. It can be assumed that problematization⁵ can be a decisive factor here. Hence, it can be postulated that those changes in organizational identity which are described by the vertical dimension in Figure 1 are believed to lead potentially to the cease of the existence of the organization due to differences in how organizational identity is described and implemented by some of its members. This may turn out to be unacceptably framed from the point of view of other members (differences are expanding quickly in a way reflected by the base of the triangle in Figure 1)⁶. However, when the horizontal dimension is analyzed, then it can be seen that there are also some differences between organizational members' voices as to whether a given change is continuous or rather discontinuous, but final solutions could be different.

Firstly, the situation, when due to processes of normalizing the controversies about the change, it becomes more consistent with the current identity, can be analyzed. Then it may turn out to be possible in one moment to promote one solution but in a way that the second solution is not forgotten, i.e. reasons for the alternative solution are still being analyzed and the solution could possibly be implemented. Changes in organizational identity are possible because even if the organization finishes its preparations for the first scenario in a given moment and finally focuses on the second scenario, all hints resulting from a consideration of the first scenario are to influence how the second scenario will be realized. In addition to this, how the second

scenario is realized is to be included when analyzing again the reasons for the first scenario - only when convincing premises are to become visible can the rejected alternative be implemented. For example, negligence of CSR activities related to the strong technical orientation of the organization could result in an image crisis whereas investing primarily in CSR activities could question the main reason for the existence of the organization. Iterations between those alternatives when maintaining awareness of both of them are to lead to some changes in organizational identity. That is why it could be postulated that possible changes in organizational identity are to be less radical and to occur more slowly (differences are expanding in a way reflected by the apex of the triangle in Figure 1).

Secondly, the situation, when the change appears to be rather a discontinuous one and normalizing the controversies about the change tends to be difficult, can be analyzed as well. The issue is that it can be postulated that even when the change is discontinuous, a suitable approach to the problem adopted by organizational members may help to solve the issue without making the threat to the organization even more serious. Here, it can be assumed that a given change in addition to being perceived as a discontinuous one due to its character (e.g. the choice of whether to invest in a new field), can also be considered as threatening due to the difficulty related to the choice of the most important criteria for its assessment (including opinions of stakeholders). It means that not only the discontinuous character of the change can account for a kind of challenge (and this is the type of challenge on which identity elasticity appears to be focused), but the level of difficulty related to the process of making a choice may be important here as well.⁷ What can be postulated is that processes of normalizing identity controversies involved in the social construction of organizational identity may facilitate an elastic stance toward organizational identity as Krainer et al. (2015) proposed. In addition to this, it appears that it may make it possible to alleviate tensions around the possible change of organizational identity when a new phenomenon is to be framed by a majority as a deviation. The core of the issue is that processes of normalizing controversies about the change tend to be viewed through the prism of considering the change as "consistent" with identity (Kreiner et al., 2015, p. 1001). It can be assumed that managers when initially inclined to think about the change as a deviation can agree that the choice is difficult. However, since choices made by the organization in the past can have something in common with the current difficult choice (e.g. the change may be perceived similarly by stakeholders) or it can be agreed among managers that those similarities may be achieved (e.g. by attempting to find common ground for decision together with stakeholders) managers do not have to close themselves off to accept some inconsistencies. Hence, normalizing the process of making a choice (and not parallelly to this normalizing the discontinuous character of the change as well) may lead to the prevention of the organization from intensifying challenges with which it needs to deal.

Kreiner et al. (2015) use the above-mentioned dialectic tensions approach to problematize (here in Alvesson and Sandberg's meaning of this term – as a methodology) assumptions related to a commonly known definition of organizational identity presented by Albert and Whetten (1985) and next discussed in greater detail by Whetten (2006). Organizational identity is specified then as “the central and enduring attributes of an organization that distinguishes it from other organizations” (Whetten, 2006, p. 220). The dimension of endurance is actually the one that is questioned more often to the extent that other researchers are inclined to even say that organizational identity is fluid (Gioia, Hamilton, 2016). The proposition presented in Figure 1 can be understood as an attempt to refer to this discussion and show that problematization applied by Kreiner et al. (2015) (again in Alvesson and Sandberg's meaning of this term - as a methodology) may prove to be useful widely. The core of the issue of the above-mentioned example is that when following a synthetic view on dialectic tensions it is not possible to focus only on framing a given phenomenon as a trajectory or a deviation from the past because the need for an alternative emerges. Hence, another solution proposed is not to focus on a definite choice but on dealing with tensions and paying attention to alternatives as they both are needed. This one was adopted by Kreiner et al. (2015) and a similar view can be found in Smith and Lewis' discussion (2011) on how different organizational tensions should be understood. Although not discussed directly by Kreiner et al. (2015) it may be proposed that organizational identity work regarding endurance of organizational identity and involving normalizing or problematizing (in the meaning of the term as simply making exceptional) controversies may be involved in explaining when and why it may not be the issue to look for definitive solutions to organizational problems as contradictory elements are to persist over time and may prove to be paradoxical. To sum up, it may be noticed that when discussing organizational identity and its elasticity, the mere existence of the concept of organizational identity is not challenged or its utility depending on the power position of different groups of stakeholders is not analyzed. That is why neither ideology assumptions nor field assumptions are under discussion.

Some additional issues can be noticed when referring to the outlined approach to a study conducted by Dutton and Dukerich (1991) in case of which it is possible to indicate some paradoxes (as defined by Smith, Lewis, 2011) as well. This study shows that not only does organizational identity enable organizational development and change, but also it may be an obstacle to it. The study can be interpreted as one showing how the increasing intersection of tensions between two organizational identities (professional organization and altruistic organization) involved organizational change when the salience of the change became unquestionable due to resource scarcity and attention paid by different groups of stakeholders. Taking account of key questions posed by Gioia and Hamilton (2016) when referring to grand debates in the field of organizational identity study, it might be noticed that some potentially significant references to the choice between perceiving organizational identity as a social construction process or perceiving it through the prism of social actor view can be made.

To give some more details, Dutton and Dukerich (1991) were interested in building a new view of organizational adaptation by focusing on how the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in the 80s was dealing with the issue of the homeless people at its facilities. The year 1986 was a time when the approach of the Port Authority towards the problem of homelessness started to change. Before that time the necessity to deal with homeless people was treated as a “normal part of business” (Dutton, Dukerich, 1991, p. 528). It meant that the organization's contact with homeless people was limited to the police as a source for it. This approach actually may remind one described in Figure 1 as “normalizing”, which is also defined by Kreiner et al. (2015, p. 1001) as defining identity challenges by claiming “business as usual”. As it was postulated, this approach may alleviate tensions related to the process of the change of organizational identity and it may lead to significant steps to be made due to less fear of making a decision. However, due to dual organizational identity in this case (professional organization and altruistic organization), this process did not lead to changes aimed at improving the situation of homeless people. Although some factors in the organizational environment had an impact on that interpretation (e.g. the antiloitering law) they did not appear to be decisive. This was because some significant changes in the interpretation of the discussed issue appeared before the antiloitering law was repealed. Even the organizational patrons’ feeling of the lack of safety did not appear to influence the organization to introduce expected changes. It was not until the problem started to be visible at the main Port Authority facilities that the organization started to undertake limited actions to prevent the problem. On the one hand, some important external circumstances did not initiate the change. On the other hand, there were important internal requirements that had to be met before the change could be initiated. The changes that started to occur in the Port Authority required it to introduce the issue of the homeless to a budgeting process in the beginning. At the same time, the fact that homeless people started to appear at the main Port Authority facilities allowed the Port Authority to recognize that it did not have suitable procedures to deal with the problem. Hence, it could be noticed that the issue of the existence of suitable procedures at the bus terminal (it was the place where homeless people were present since the beginning) and the potential reluctance to start a process of preparing new procedures and routines was one but significant reason behind the slow process of changing the situation. Here, the impact of dual organizational identity (this issue is still emphasized as relevant for organizational identity research - Knorr, Hein-Pensel, 2024) as well as the impact of external or internal organizational factors on how the process of normalizing is to occur may emerge as fields of research investigation. In addition to this one question that may arise is what the main tension was in the example of the Port Authority. Possibly it could be one between the importance of the organization and its interpretation as a “high-quality organization” (Dutton, Dukerich, 1991, p. 526) and the issue of high visibility of the problem or one between employees’ sense of the Port Authority as “family” (Dutton, Dukerich, 1991, p. 527) and a lack of safety. In addition to this, the next possibility that emerges is the tension between the reluctance to prepare suitable

procedures and the existence of well-adopted ones. The question could also be whether a possibly important issue of procedures and routines could be attached to the line of thought, possibly present in Dutton and Dukerich's study (1991), which underestimates the importance of the part of daily social interactions. Those are important for the social construction approach to organizational identity. At the same time, the period of the study was described by Dutton and Dukerich (1991) as dominated by a new director who directly adopted the approach in line with which the Port Authority should not be a "social service business" (Dutton, Dukerich, 1991, p. 532). When taking into account this issue, it could be argued that organizational identity in this case was defined mainly by following the social actor view. In general, further analysis of those problems may focus on the issues of attribute-based and process-based views of organizational identity. Nevertheless, the issue of recognizing tensions and approaching them from a position free from ideological bias may appear to be mainly relevant for the opportunities to pose research questions related to organizational identity but less focused on organizational identity understood as "central and enduring attributes of an organization that distinguishes it from other organizations" (Whetten, 2006, p. 220).

3.2 Dialectical approach and organizational identification

Drawing on a broad body of literature, Suddaby, Foster, and Trank (2016, p. 297) argue that organizational identification can have "critical importance" for organizations due to its potential to enhance an organization's relationship with different groups of actors. When emphasizing the importance of "elaborating the constituent elements of organizational identification" (Suddaby, Foster, Trank, 2016, p. 297), they also pay attention to that the identification can be understood as the process and then it is required that "ongoing management of perceptions of identity in the past, present, and future" occurs (Suddaby, Foster, Trank, 2016, p. 298). Not questioning that the kind of affiliation between organizational members and their organizations needs to be constructed over time, the considerations presented in this paragraph are to be focused primarily on discussing what insights can be derived from viewing organizational identification as a state that is impacted by different aspects of the organizational life. When combining the approach presented by Kreiner et al. (2015) with some additional insights presented especially by Mumby (2004), it becomes possible to show how Alvesson and Sandberg's discussion (2011) related to Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquill's (1994) study can be developed. Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquill (1994) built the model according to which key organizational images (these are both images based on what according to the organizational member is distinctive, central, and enduring about the organization and images based on beliefs presented by organizational members as to what outsiders think about the organization) may shape the strength of organizational members' identification with the organization. Here organizational identification is understood as the cognitive connection that is created when "a person's self-concept contains the same attributes as those in the perceived organizational identity" (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquill, 1994, p. 239). Among others, it is proposed that the

better a given image is in preserving the continuity of members' self-concept, providing distinctiveness, and enhancing members' self-esteem, the higher its attractiveness for organizational members is. Due to those features of images, it appears to be possible to postulate about their impact on the strength of members' organizational identification. When applying the methodology of problematization to Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail's (1994) study, Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) pay attention to the fact that e.g. Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) explained the term "perceived organizational identity", which they introduced, by referring to statements which are aimed at conceptualizing their subject matter related to member identification and not at "highlighting" (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2011, p. 261) assumptions based on which Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) are to build their argument. Whereas attempts at discussing assumptions about a given subject matter (like in the case of Simon's bounded rationality concept that challenged assumptions of rational decision makers – Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 255) may open opportunities to ask new questions regarding even field assumptions, what Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) argue about the attributes of the organization and members' beliefs about them is itself underpinned "by a range of assumptions" (Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 261). Hence, the question of whether those arguments could be "productive" (Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 261) may be posed.

To emphasize a few further issues related to Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail's (1994) study, which were outlined by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011), it is needed to pay attention to the use of dualist ontological assumption and next to the claim that, in general, existing independently individuals and organizations should be constituted by a set of attributes (inherent and characterized by at least some stability). The other important issue also relates to whether it should be allowed to assume that the organization as a whole is all the time the same thing about which its members could have beliefs (related e.g. to its enduring attributes) or even whether, taking into account modern capitalism, lasting relationships with organizations are existing at all (Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, pp. 261-263). Following the above-mentioned argumentation and attempting to show some possible next insights, at the beginning it may be noticed that for Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) the strength of organizational identification means that different organizational members perceive their characteristics as being to a large extent the same as those that define their organization. What is more, the identity of a given organizational member is more salient than alternative identities (Dutton, Dukerich, Harquail, 1994). Nevertheless, some problems with such conceptualization may arise. When researching trust-control relationships in creative organizations (that is conductorless orchestra), Khodyakov (2007) proved that due to the intricacy of trust-control relationships, the duality theory should be chosen to explain this relationship. Treating trust and control as a duality means here that they cannot be analyzed in isolation due to their co-presence. Referring to the previously mentioned Möllering (2005), on the one hand, Khodyakov (2007) argues that trust and control create each other. But on the other hand, they still become "irreducible to one another" (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 2). Here it turns out that both trust and

control should be required for successful performance. However, there are no direct control strategies used. Instead, other forms of control are used, these are behavioral, input, output, and social control. As a result of this, the line between trust and control is blurred. But even in the case of the relationship between trust and social control, trust is not to be reduced to social control because it would not be sufficient for the orchestra to operate only under the assumption that each musician, when being socialized into a specific organizational culture, can “adequately control his or her behavior” (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 17). At the same time, the orchestra is said to achieve optimal distinctiveness through the reliance on trust and control that are “intricately intertwined” (Khodyakov, 2007, p. 3). This intersection of uniqueness (based on artistic dimension) and organizational competitiveness achieved by this organization may lead to the question of whether the issue of possible organizational identification (understood as the “cognitive connections between the definition of an organization and the definition a person applies to him - or herself” - Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail, 1994, p. 242) in such circumstances still could play a crucial role for organizational members or more relevant bases for good performance, can be investigated. The issue is that when it is possible that organizational members do not perceive themselves from the point of view of the traits of the whole organization (Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011), relationships that occur at a different level of analysis may prove to explain a good organizational performance in a better way. Although Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail (1994) admit that because individual-organizational attachment appears to be more than an intrapersonal phenomenon, cognitive attachment to some extent can be considered a “social and interpersonal process” (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail, 1994, p. 257), by building their proposition they appear not to take into consideration that spaces, in which stable and robust degree of perceived similarity between individual and organization can be established, can be “rare” (Alvesson, Sandberg, 2011, p. 263). Then it appears that more process-sensitive approaches could be more relevant. What can also be emphasized, when one does not apply a duality approach, then elements in case of which “each assume the existence of the other” (Möller, 2005, p. 284) may be treated as separate routes to a given aim, and then what can be implied is only e.g. “a potential relationship between trust and control” (Möllering, 2005, p. 299; Khodyakov, 2007). The duality perspective in this sense makes it possible to become aware of control elements in strong trust relationships or, conversely, those relationships that appeared to be strictly controlled could reveal their trust elements (Möllering, 2005). Hence, it is not possible to explain one without the other in a complete way. Khodyakov's research (2007) shows that the use of the perspective based on the assumption of the mutual constitution of constructs can bring about opportunities to develop new ideas. For example, although the paper presented by Khodyakov (2007) does not relate directly to the issue of organizational identification, it describes one important interpersonal characteristic (that is civility) that should help give a good performance by the orchestra without a conductor. The core of the matter is that when disagreeing with other musicians, the person who disagrees is expected to express this fact in such a way as to avoid offending colleagues. Otherwise,

the development of trust would not be possible in such a case. The issue of whether e.g. a high level of trust among organizational members (and not social control) can make it possible to pursue good performance also under circumstances of weakening organizational identification due to personal matters may provide researchers with an opportunity to formulate the next research questions. For example, the question can be related to whether it is possible to find sufficiently strong common reasons for organizational identification among members who trust themselves to the extent that the level of trust implies that some level of organizational identification is to be always maintained. Alternatively, can those common reasons for organizational identification support trust relationships to the extent that these relationships are not to be destroyed due to some external difficulties? What is more, although it may not be possible now to settle the discussion related to how organizational identification should be defined, arguments for treating it rather through the prism of congruence among values held by members and their organizations (e.g. Lee, 1971) may be justified when approaching issues of organizational identification related to creative organizations. Hence, it may be that insights from other fields of research may encourage researchers to rethink how they are to define their constructs and whether assumptions necessary for relationships among them to be relevant are those on which they are to be focused most.

4. Conclusions

The paper focused on how problematization within the literature domain of organizational identity and identification can encourage researchers to pose research questions that potentially may be relevant to the audience. What should be emphasized, more radical propositions on how the construct of organizational identity could be redefined were not discussed. Due to the approach involved when problematizing the selected domain of literature, examples of the modern dialectical approach and the applications of the theory of paradox proved to be useful tools. On the one hand, the examples shown in the paper were focused on discussing how the construct of organizational identity was challenged in the literature by the use of dialectics tensions (Kreiner et al., 2015) as well as on how this argumentation can be used when attempting to ask further questions in the field of attributes important from the point of view of organizational identity studies. On the other hand, some attention was paid to the issues of problematizing (in the sense of exacerbating) or normalizing (in the sense of taking as usual) challenges resulting from relaxing assumptions related to the endurance of organizational identity. Some propositions as to how the understanding of both terms (i.e. problematizing and normalizing) can be developed were included. Also, it was discussed how investigation of similar approaches from other research fields may provide researchers with the opportunities to look for questions related to the issues mentioned by Ravasi and van Rekom (2003) as the most

important from the point of view of the field of study investigated in the paper. Here, a need for careful choices of different types of assumptions was postulated to be of primary importance before propositions concerning relationships between new constructs can be built.

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Footnotes

¹ Generally, the procedure outlined by Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) is comprised of six steps (starting from a step involving identifying a domain of literature for assumption-challenging investigations to step six involving evaluating the alternative assumption ground. Due to the space limit, they are not to be discussed in detail here.

- ² Benson (1977) in his paper on a dialectical approach to the study of organizations presented four principles of dialectical analysis which were believed to guide “a dialectical view of any particular field of study” (Benson, 1977, p. 3). These were social construction/production, totality, contradiction, and praxis (Benson, 1977). In general, praxis can be understood as a mechanism of agency whose important aspect is the assumption that people, under certain conditions, can become active agents reconstructing their social relationships and ultimately themselves based on rational analysis (Benson, 1977, pp. 5-6).
- ³ What is important, such an assumption does not imply that the phenomenon described by the control-resistance dynamic is said to be a purely discursive one. Here both discursive and material forms of organizational behavior are to be understood through the frame of discourse. Because organizational behavior may be subjected to competing efforts aimed at shaping and fixing its meaning, a dialectical approach may be focused on the struggles of different groups with meaning systems that are believed to be constitutive of daily life in organizations (Mumby, 2004).
- ⁴ For a more detailed discussion on Frankfurt school see Janiszewski, 2023b.
- ⁵ The meaning of the problematization used in the context of Kreiner et al.’s (2015) research is not only one that is aligned with the meaning used in Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) paper. For Kreiner et al. (2015, p. 1001) and in the context of the description of their dialectics, when one problematizes something then one treats something as “exceptional”.
- ⁶ Other possibilities included in Figure 1, which combines trajectory and problematizing, may need additional explanations. Processes of problematizing identity controversies may facilitate an inelastic stance toward organizational identity as Krainer et al. (2015) proposed. In addition to this, it appears that they may make it possible to accelerate the change of organizational identity when a new phenomenon is to be framed by a majority as a trajectory. The core of the issue is that processes of problematizing controversies about the change tend to be viewed through the prism of considering the change as “exceptional” (Kreiner et al., 2015, p. 1001). It can be assumed that managers when initially inclined to think about the change as a trajectory can agree that the choice related to how the change should be understood is not difficult because the change can be considered as a continuous one. However, e.g. because similar choices (resulting from e.g. ingroup bias and strong and exclusive identification - Caprar, Walker, Ashforth, 2022) made by the organization in the past led to disappointing results and due to concerns related to long-term perspectives, managers can start looking for inconsistent solutions to the choice problem and this is how processes of problematizing can emerge.
- ⁷ Of course, here a discussion can emerge whether the change that is to be assessed as discontinuous can have “other” criteria for the assessment. Following Krainer et al.’s logic (2015), it can be said that these criteria may refer to what attitude toward the change stakeholders may have. For example, from the point of view of managers, investing in a given new field may be a continuous change and the attitude toward this change on the part of stakeholders may be positive. The next investment may be interpreted by managers as a discontinuous change, however, stakeholders may have positive or negative attitudes toward it. In the first case, the criteria for making this decision can be more similar to those considered by managers during the first investment. In the latter case, those criteria are less similar to those included in the past. Hence, considering the level of difficulty related to the process of making a choice as being possible to be differentiated in case of a discontinuous change can be justified.