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Rapid Transformation in a Dual Identity Defense University

by

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30 April 2005

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) We discuss and examine strategies used to achieve rapid transformation when there are specialized identities within an organization. In this case study we use a grounded theory approach, conducting interviews with individuals representing the various subgroups in the organization two years after a reform initiative was undertaken. Transcripts were thematically analyzed. The findings contributed to the development of a model to depict the effects of a specialized management identity that employs a deletion strategy using coercion to effect rapid transformation. Recommendations are presented for specialized identity change management strategies.				
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Abstract

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the “9/11” terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, and subsequent war on terrorism have created a critical need for rapid transformation of the United States defense doctrine and its many organizations. When the environment changes, rapid transformation may be necessary for survival, but procedures to achieve reform with speed may or may not be effective. This technical report examines how engaging in military style rapid transformation impacted a premiere educational institution of the Department of Defense, a university with specialized identities held by the military management and academic faculty subgroups. The leader and head change strategist of this institution took a multiple identity organization and mandated rapid transformation. To date, little research has been conducted to understand the coercive mode for managing multiple organizational identities in the process of rapid transformation. To explore this subject and to edify existing theory, interviews were conducted with members of an organization two years after a rapid transformation initiative was deployed. Using informed grounded theory we examine and discuss how the strategies employed to achieve reform may have reduced the initiative’s success to create rapid transformation and limited the organization’s range of future capabilities. Based upon our findings we develop a model to depict the effects of a specialized management identity that employs a deletion strategy using coercion to effect rapid transformation. We conclude with recommendations for specialized identity change management strategies.

Executive Summary

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to learn more about the process of rapid transformation and how the strategies used to implement this type of change can impact both the organization and its members. We studied one of the Department of Defense's premiere educational institutions. This university is one that possesses specialized organizational identities for both the military management and academic faculty subgroups. The military leadership of the organization, representing a specialized management identity, engaged in a rapid transformation initiative in 2001. Our findings represent the first phase of a longitudinal study, aiming to contribute to a deeper understanding of rapid transformation; its costs, benefits, and the results that can be expected in multiple identity organizations with subgroups holding specialized organizational identities.

As head strategist of a multiple identity organization, the leader of the transformation initiative mandated reform and moved to infuse a swift and robust change. During this process he subordinated the identity of the technical core, which is described by Pratt and Foreman (2000) as the deletion strategy. This is viewed as a viable way to implement immediate change, and may be necessary in times of extreme urgency and scarce resources. While short-term benefits can emerge from this approach, long-term impacts and opportunity costs are largely unknown. To extend theory, to better understand the outcomes of this strategy, and to provide recommendations to future leaders, we asked this research question: *When a specialized management subgroup implements a deletion strategy through coercion to effect rapid transformation, what impacts does it have on the organization?*

Overview of Study

The first part of our research focused on drawing from relevant literature to better understand transformation in organizations with specialized identities. A study was designed to better understand the process and its outcomes, from those who actually engaged in a rapid transformation change initiative. Interviews were conducted with participants from each subgroup identity within the organization, two years after the reform initiative began. Thematic analysis was conducted from the transcripts and themes were developed to build theory. Conclusions from our findings led to recommendations with regards to transformation strategies when there are multiple subgroups in an organization with specialized identities. The study served as a reflection on the process that provided an essential feedback loop, key to understanding long-term impacts from organizational change initiatives.

Future Plans

Our goal is to use this information as a springboard for further theory development. Future plans include conducting another series of interviews with representation from the multiple subgroups so we may continue to understand the implications of rapid transformation over time.

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Special thanks go to the participants in this study who generously offered their time and reflections on the organization and their experience. This research was possible because of the interviews and preliminary analysis conducted by LC Timothy R. Jett, LT Shea S. Thompson, and LT Alan R. Wing.

RAPID TRANSFORMATION IN A DUAL IDENTITY DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the “9/11” terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, and the subsequent war on terrorism created a critical need for rapid transformation of the United States defense doctrine and its many organizations. Instead of facing a large identifiable opponent, the U.S. must now fight against small, agile, malleable terrorist cells, unofficially associated with any nation state. This dramatic shift in the defense environment created the necessity for immediate and rapid transformation to organizational structures, processes, culture and organizations throughout the Department of Defense (DOD; QDR, 2001; Vision 2020). As a result of government and military leaders’ efforts to instill this reform throughout the DOD, many organizations have already gone through expeditious change processes and are now able to reflect upon their experiences and consider the impacts and potential outcomes to date.

To learn more about the process of rapid transformation and how the strategies are used to implement this type of change to impact organizations and their members, we studied one of the DOD’s premiere educational institutions. This university possesses specialized organizational identities for both the military management and academic faculty subgroups and engaged in a rapid transformation initiative in 2001. Our findings represent the first phase of a longitudinal study, aiming to contribute to a deeper understanding of rapid transformation; its costs, benefits, and the results that can be expected in multiple identity organizations.

We view rapid transformation as a situation in which an organization seeks to create an immediate shift in its mission, structure, and culture. Such a daunting task was undertaken by the leader of an organization, the one featured in this study. As head

strategist of a multiple identity organization this leader choose to mandate reform to initiate and infuse swift and robust change. In the initiative he subordinated the organizational identity of the technical core, which is described by Pratt and Foreman (2000) as a deletion strategy. This is viewed as a viable way to implement immediate change and can be deemed necessary in times of extreme urgency and scarce resources. While short-term benefits can emerge from this approach, long-term impacts and opportunity costs are largely unknown. To extend theory, to better understand the outcomes of such strategies, and to provide recommendations to future leaders, we asked this research question: *When a specialized management subgroup implements a deletion strategy through coercion to effect rapid transformation, what impacts does it have on the organization?*

We begin with a description of organizational transformation and modes for change, organizational identity, and strategies for managing multiple identity organizations. We then proceed by describing the military's current efforts to create rapid transformation in the organization under study. To explore the impacts of using coercion to create rapid transformation in a multiple identity organization, we conducted interviews with organizational members two years after the initiative was deployed. We discuss our findings, set forth propositions and a model to depict them, and provide recommendations to leaders who may be considering or facing rapid transformation in organizations with multiple identities.

Organizational Transformation

Transformation has been adopted as a convenient term to describe major organizational change, but along with a growing number of references there are almost as many definitions (Beer, 1988; Blumenthal & Haspeslagh, 1994). It seems as though both

private and public sector organizations like to espouse accomplishing varying degrees of transformation, yet the term is applied so loosely it is sometimes difficult to ascertain what type of change has been achieved. We hinge our definition of transformation on changes made to the entire system (Senge, 1990). This includes, but is not restricted to, shifting beliefs about what is possible and necessary for the organization (Jick, 1993), reframing attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values (Bartunek, 1988), and redefining the organization's relevant psychological space (Golembiewski, 1979). Before proceeding we revisit the bedrock for understanding systemic or transformational change, systems theory.

Systems Theory. As the dominant paradigm used to understand organizations since Katz and Kahn (1966) outlined how inputs are processed into outputs leading to feedback, systems theory is central to viewing organizations as organisms. An organization, like a living entity, interacts within its environment and receives feedback both internally and externally. These interactions can lead to improvements in processes and outcomes. Since transformation is inherently systemic, it can be compared to living organisms; organizations grow, develop through stages, mature, and eventually die. As strategists know all too well organizational external environments, including turbulence and uncertainty, influence organizational systems. To survive through ongoing shifts produced by the external system, so too must organizations have the ability to continually transform and evolve. Organizations must be malleable and to sustain movement and need to remain agile and flexible with the ability to collectively adapt to new or altered conditions. This suggests that transformation will benefit from leveraging systemic commonalities between organizational members (i.e., through shared motives, values,

and objectives).

The need to transform usually emerges in times of crisis, as systems do not typically seek systemic change when functioning is perceived to be effective. According to Levy and Merry (1986), transformation is the response to a realization that the organization cannot continue to function as before and its sustained existence requires a massive reshuffling in every dimension. Given the need for such dramatic change we see that transformation requires changed behavior throughout the entire system, at both the organizational and individual level. If change is not inculcated via systems and structures along with organizational member behaviors the program is predicted to be cosmetic, short-lived, and will not have the desired effects (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992).

Transformation and systemic change have often been viewed as processes that take time. Therefore, the idea of rapid transformation, changing the entire system with immediacy, is a daunting challenge. As Stroh and Jaatinen (2001) suggest, if change is episodic, short-term, or imposed, the effort not only lacks the qualities of transformation, it is superficial, temporary, and most likely a waste of resources. Viewed as a long-term process (Hall, Rosenthal, & Wade, 1993; Senge, 1990), there is no denying that many initiatives implemented with haste can only expect short-term results. For systemic evolution to occur, changes must be owned and internalized, which rarely happens overnight. If transformational change is a process whereby members create and embrace an entirely new culture, it perhaps can only be achieved when there is a basis of trust, transparency, and sustained learning. According to Head (1997) transformation is a step-by-step process of restructuring an existing organization. This process, however, is very different from a short-term mandate for reorganization. It is a process that involves

keeping what is valued or what works, letting go of and/or removing what does not, and creating and implementing new systems and structures that support new or updated desired outcomes. This process is enabled by tapping into the potential of the organization's human resources and by aligning the structural and the cultural processes in accordance with shared goals.

Gouillart and Kelly (1995) see the process of transformation as moving beyond the flow of information, with increasing movement toward more connectivity and relationships, which create knowledge communities that serve to support the system. These communities are essential for message dissemination, helping to develop members' shared understanding, infusing a sense of responsibility, and supporting members' ability to contribute and adapt to the larger environment by building capacity through inclusion and involvement. Engagement in the process of change is typically parsed by roles categorized as strategists, agents, and recipients (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 1992). Change strategists envision and/or craft the change plan, while agents are responsible for the implementation required to enact the vision. Without participation in the development or implementation of the program, members of the organization, although they may assume aspects or ownership of the aforementioned roles, are considered recipients.

Collaborative or Coercive Modalities

Transformation can be generated through alternative modes; change managers must decide what mode is the most appropriate strategy to apply, given their organizational situation (Dunphy & Stace, 1988). Although the collaborative mode may be preferred, particularly in terms of overcoming resistance, it often involves the participation of stakeholders and the development of a vision and values, which may take

too long when perceived survivability is at stake. In contrast, the coercive mode involves the use of force, the threat of punishment, and autocratic decision-making.

For example, let us assume the lead strategist holds positive intentions and the highest regard for all organizational members. However, if the plan for transformation conveys that members better join in or get out of the way, this coercive mode may generate urgency, but what else does it impact? Indeed, Kotter (1995) places establishment of urgency as the first in a series of eight steps to transform, but what does this urgency cost? Typically speed and efficiency are deemed the most favorable attributes, and urgency costs are not assessed. This is particularly appealing when the dominant group has sufficient power to overcome resistance.

Dunphy and Stace call using the coercive mode to create transformative change dictatorial transformation (1988), explaining that this approach is appropriate when the organization is out of fit with the environment, there is no time for extensive participation, and no support exists within the organization for radical change, yet radical change is necessary for organizational survival and mission fulfillment (1988). Alternatively, collaboration is a feature of charismatic transformation. This form is also appropriate when the organization is out of fit and there is little time for participation, but the difference in this scenario is that there is pre-existing support within the organization. While rapid transformation may be deemed vital, we wondered how such change could be managed in multiple identity organizations. Specifically, we hoped to understand what occurs when other core identities exist in the organization that appear to run counter to the management identity who is initiating the reform.

Organizational Identity. The identity of an organization is the composition of organizational characteristics that members believe are central, distinctive, and enduring. They are features that persist over time and are fundamental to, and uniquely descriptive of, the organization (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). As outlined by Dutton and her colleagues, members incorporate the characteristics they attribute to their organization into their interpretive structures. This application serves to mediate how people think, feel, and behave (c.f. Gecas, 1982; Schenkler, 1985; Markus and Wurf, 1987). Multiple identities are linked to a person's concept of self, including memberships in social groups at work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). These identities may overlap, such as those stemming from a person's profession and their role within the organization. In short, organizational identity includes features of a person's self-concept that support their identity within the organization. While the construct has different interpretations (see for example, Hall, Schneider, & Nygren, 1970; Lee, 1971; Hall and Schneider, 1972) we view organizational identity as a process of self-definition (Brown, 1969) and self-categorization, which can strengthen when individuals categorize themselves into social groups within their organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Pratt and Foreman propose that organizations seldom have one identity and that “multiple organizational identities can and should be managed” (2000, p. 18). Multiple identities create potential benefits and liabilities for managers. Strategies for managing these identities in the process of rapid transformation, when urgency and survivability are paramount, are yet to be fully explored. To address this concern, we look to distinctions proffered by Albert and Whetten (1985) regarding multiple identity forms.

The *ideographic* or *specialized* form of identity is associated with different collectives that exist in different parts of the organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). These specialized identities are not common to all organizational members but, instead, are retained by specific subgroups. Conversely, *holographic* identities exist when each of the multiple identities inherent in the organization are held by all organizational members. We are particularly interested in the specialized form, as defense organizations are typically characterized by specific subgroup identities (e.g., active and retired officer and enlisted members from different warfare communities, members from different Services, DOD civilians and contractors). When organizations possess specialized identities, there is the potential for different reactions toward transformation.

Awareness and management of these identities seems of vital import, especially during times of change. To add complexity to the matter, this may be particularly sensitive when the identity held by management is different from that of the organization's technical core (Thompson, 1967). Mintzberg (1980) would call the former the strategic apex and the latter the operating core (individuals who do the basic work of the organization). Given the distinctions set forth, we heretofore refer to this subgroup, the strategic apex, as a specialized management identity.

When considering specialized identity management, we draw again upon the work of Pratt and Foreman (2000). They describe two key aspects of multiple identities; the number of identities (plurality) and the level of interaction and coordination between them (synergy). The plurality and synergy of identities can provide the organization with flexibility and the ability to respond to a range of stakeholders. But too many identities or too little synergy can create conflict and waste resources. High plurality is needed when

identities are supported by stakeholders, are intensely held, and provide legitimacy or strategic value. Low plurality is appropriate when resources to create synergy between identities are limited. High synergy is needed when compatibility and interdependence are high and identities are diffused across the organization (i.e. holographic). Low synergy is appropriate when identities are specialized (ideographic); that is, when different subgroups hold different organizational identities and there is little need for interaction between them. Per Pratt and Foreman (2000), the interaction between plurality and synergy creates four possible identity management strategies: 1) Compartmentalization (plurality with little need for synergy); 2) Aggregation (need to link identities); 3) Deletion (plurality with the need to reduce plurality and synergy); and 4) Integration (need to fuse identities into a distinct new whole).

Multiple Identities and Culture. Organizational identity is closely linked to organizational culture. Balmer and Wilson identify disciplinary perspectives on organizational identity including the cultural perspective, proposing the organization's corporate identity serves as the source for an organization's corporate culture (1998). An organizational identity, as the intersection between the member's definition of self and the organization, helps to direct individual interpretations of a situation and can therefore potentially influence individual behavior. Therefore, organizational identity may be a powerful tool in transformation. Given this understanding, changes in organizational identity may be a route to eventual change in culture, thus transforming the organization.

As previously described, transformation involves creating shifts within the organization at every level, including the organization's culture. In specialized multiple identity organizations, differences in subgroup culture are typically associated with

differences in organizational identities. The organization under study, like many military organizations, involves both military and civilians. In addition, we see that the DOD has many compartmentalized, specialized organizational identities with varying cultures, which the military must effectively manage. Other DOD organizations with similar identity patterns include military hospitals, Joint Service programs and departments, and even virtual organizations, such as military acquisition Program Offices. Civilian organizations, including universities, may also experience this identity and cultural divide between management and technical core. A specialized management identity organization can be represented by one core culture representing management, that assumes its norms and values from a main external stakeholder (e.g., military) and are paired alongside another core culture that represents the technical core, that assume its norms and values from their shared functional discipline (e.g., academic).

Military Transformation

In the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR; 2001), Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense approved an entire transformation chapter that said, "...achieving the objectives of the defense strategy requires the transformation of the U.S. Armed Forces" (p. 29). A new office, the Office of Force Transformation (OFT), was created to evaluate transformation roadmaps and specific timelines generated by military departments and defense agencies. The QDR elaborates on social, intellectual, and technological transformation including the need for new forms of organization.

Art Cebrowski, VADM (Ret.), former Director, Office of Force Transformation, described transformation as a "continuous process with no end, meant to create and anticipate the future" (September, 2002, p. 1). He explained the process would deal with the co-evolution of concepts, processes, organizations, and technology and, because of

the systemic interdependencies within the DOD, change in any one of these areas would necessitate changes in all of them. Transformation in this regard is intended to identify, leverage and create new underlying principles for the way things are done. This means that processes to effect transformation must identify and leverage new sources of power. The objectives of this military transformation are to “sustain our American competitive advantage in warfare.” Given this urgent call, yet considering our review of transformation, we observe the DOD’s transformational efforts are intended to be systemic, ongoing, and strategic. At the highest levels top military change strategists have recognized the need for transformation through cultural change. At the organizational level, however, military managers seem to be more familiar and comfortable with organizational models that focus on organizational control, rather than with human relations or open systems models that target flexibility and the creation of cultural change through concepts like organizational identity management (Paparone, 2003).

The Organization. In support of the DOD’s call for urgent change, rapid transformation was initiated by the military Superintendent of a premiere graduate university for U.S. and allied armed forces officers. The objectives of the transformation were to better align the organization to its military sponsors, to become more relevant to military sponsors, and to mitigate the rapidly approaching threat of base closure.¹ The Superintendent said that external stakeholders in Washington D.C. perceived the university as an academic enclave with fiscal irresponsibility, and that if the organization did not change quickly it would be susceptible to closure in 2005. Assuming the role of lead change strategist within four months of his appointment, and with little faculty

¹ The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) anticipates impact to 25% of the defense infrastructure, with over 100 U.S. defense facilities to be closed or realigned.

consultation, he completed a diagnosis, developed a vision and new organizational structure, and informed the academic core of the timeline for implementation.

To meet the goal of realigning the university with DOD's mission, he replaced multiple departments with three new schools crisscrossed by four research institutes in a quasi-matrix organization, including four new Deans hired from external sources to head the new schools. Additionally, three Executive Directors were appointed (one from within the school, the rest from external sources) with military backgrounds, and who shared the Superintendent's vision for the school. The Deans and Executive Directors assumed the role of change agents with the faculty as recipients of the transformation initiative (see Figure 1).

Prior to the initiative, the organization possessed high plurality, as represented by two distinctive specialized organizational identities; academic and military. Members of each specialized subgroup held the general perception that their identity represented the organization's identity. To expound, each subgroup used their own organizational identity to describe the organization as a whole, possessed internal and external stakeholders, and held multiple subgroups within their organizational identity core. While the leadership position of the university (Superintendent)² has always been military, the fact that the organization is an accredited university establishes its distinctive and specialized academic identity. While management is essentially military, the technical core is predominantly civilian academics, paramount to sustaining the institution's academic credibility. Faculty members among the technical core typically view the university as a research and academic institution. Military members among the

² In 2004 the position of Superintendent was renamed to President.

management core typically view the university as an extension of the military, similar to the Naval War College, where the organizational identity is an educational institution providing junior officers (students) with the foundation on the principles of war and the development of strategic thought.³

A moderate level of synergy existed between the two subgroups, but interdependence was present. The concept of a military university marching in unison to the beat of a strong hierarchy is in stark contrast to the concept of a research university exploring and rigorously testing diverse ideas. Yet many opportunities for the organization could only be realized when there was compatibility between its multiple identities. For example, members of the military could work with academic faculty to help identify, address, and study military issues, problems, and research questions. This occurred on an individual-by-individual basis, but was readily observable across multiple disciplines.

Prior to the initiative the organization mirrored a compartmentalization strategy to manage its multiple identities. In short, the organization preserved multiple identities, but did not seek to develop synergy between them. When mutually beneficial, members of subgroups came together to accomplish shared tasks. Therefore, higher synergy could have been beneficial, but the time needed to develop collaborative partnerships was not considered an effective use of resources. The initiative put in motion by the Superintendent used a deletion strategy via coercion mode, largely ignoring the academic aspects of the university's organizational identity and it was announced as a mandate. The plan for change was a mandated rapid transformation, infused throughout the

³ See mission statement for Naval War College: <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/L1/missionstate.htm>.

organization via re-engineering the university's structure and putting in place newly hired agents to implement the change.

We marked the effort as using a deletion strategy, given the description and theoretical research by Pratt & Foreman (2000). When management moves to rid, close out, or abscond with an organizational identity, quickly and consciously or slowly and unconsciously, they are imposing a deletion strategy. The strategy is used to limit the number of identities and quite literally can imply chopping off identities that are not valued or wanted (c.f. Reger et al., 1998). When there is little concern for plurality or synergy, the deletion strategy is employed. This can result when there is powerful stakeholder influence, strategic value of the identity is low and resource constraints are high, or when compatibility, interdependence, or diffusion are low (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). If an identity is viewed as peripheral to the main mission of the organization, deletion is likely to be considered. Due to ease of implementation, deletion can be particularly appealing when ideographic or specialized identities may exist (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1996).

Ashforth and Mael (1996) note deletion is a radical change maneuver because it presents the risk of alienating key constituent groups. Those who frame multiple identities more expansively, garner more loyalty and commitment from their members than those managers who pursue narrower identity strategies (Eccles et al., 1992). While both long and short-term outcomes of this strategy have been discussed theoretically, empirical studies to demonstrate such impacts are few and far between. Pratt and Foreman propose that deletion carries underestimated costs (cf. Albert, 1992), but also has the potential to shift organizations to become more mission directed. They argue,

“The reduction of identities may allow for more focused responses and may prevent organizations from becoming drained by intraorganizational conflict and the heightened use of resources associated with maintaining multiple identities” (Pratt & Foreman, 2000, p. 18).

In this case, the means used to create rapid transformation were coercive. More specifically, the deletion strategy was imposed through coercive pressure exerted via the management directives (cf. Dunphy & Stace, 1988). Whether formally or informally exerted, lead strategists of transformation (in this case the Superintendent of the university), may use their power to force the organization to comply with the changes being prescribed, regardless of existing resistance. Coercive pressure is argued to play a likely role in instigating programs of radical transformation when there is widespread opposition to the change within the organization (Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2002). This method of instigating organizational change comes with an expectation of immediate compliance (Beer, 1988).

Methods

To understand the impacts of using coercion to create rapid transformation in a multiple identity organization, we considered members’ organizational identity (military or academic) and their role in the change process (strategist, agent or recipient). The sample was composed of strategists, agents and recipients. The strategists included the Superintendent, Academic Provost, and direct reports to the Superintendent on strategic planning and execution. This group worked together to develop, design, and guide the strategy for rapid transformation. The Deans of the four newly created schools and the Executive Directors of the four research institutes were the change agents charged with implementing the initiative. Finally, the recipients of the change were primarily the

academic faculty within each school—throughout the entire university. Subjects were selected based upon their role and randomly selected if more than one person assumed that role (N=23). We acknowledge that the administrative staff of an organization is critical to transformation efforts; however, our interest in this study was to focus on management and the technical core. During the initiative members assumed different change roles that generally split along organizational identity lines; management assumed the roles of change strategists and agents indicative of the military identity, and faculty assumed the role of recipients reflecting their predominant academic identity.

Two years after the initiative was implemented the interviews were conducted with organizational members who participated in the change process. To accumulate data, leaders from each target group were identified and contacted by phone to request and set up an interview. A semi-structured protocol was created using open-ended questions, yet tailored for each change role (see Appendix). This provided consistency but also elicited specific information deemed necessary to understand their process. Data were collected by Jett, Wing, and Thompson (2002) as a part of an MBA research project, under the advisement of the first two authors. The transcripts were kept confidential to garner candid responses from those participating. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim, then returned to participants to amend and/or to add further clarifications. Once the accuracy was confirmed by participants⁴ data were entered into the NVivo software used to assist with theme development and to facilitate coding.

⁴ Minor points were added, but there were no significant changes made to the transcripts by the participants.

An informed grounded theory approach and thematic analysis were used to understand members' experiences in the process and their perception of the outcomes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Boyatzis, 1998). The process followed a qualitative research methodology using a compare and contrast method to develop themes, toward the creation of a coding system (Boyatzis, 1998). Using a frequency formula based upon percentage of agreement on presence, $2 \times (\text{number of times both Coder A and Coder B saw it present}) / (\text{number of times Coder A saw it present} + \text{number of times Coder B saw it present})$, two coders independently tested the codebook achieving a 79% inter-rater reliability. One theme had low reliability due to lack of presence, but was kept after clarifications were made to its description. The coders then independently coded the remaining dataset (n=21) and a final inter-rater reliability of 91% was achieved. Due to the small sample size and need for role representation, the two transcripts used to develop the codebook were recoded using the final codebook and included in the final analyses.

Results

The analysis elevated twelve different themes from the data. The presence for each theme is described by highlighting distinctions among the three change roles that reflect similarities and differences between organizational identities. More specifically, those participants who assumed a role as change strategist or agent generally represent the military organizational identity and recipients of the change, the academic. We present the themes with their descriptions and representative quotes. Table 1 depicts each theme by change roles and organizational identity in descending order of frequency, based upon responses from the academic organizational identity.

The first theme, *Agreement with Realignment*, is reflected by a participant understanding the need to impose organizational change and the actions taken to realign

the school. This was the most frequently mentioned theme noted by all participants, regardless of their change role and organizational identity, and reflects the ultimate buy-in that resulted among those who remained in the organization. Participants discussed both the vision and process of realignment as being necessary for the organization to remain relevant. Participants shared the perception that the organization was moving in the right direction. While this theme is most prevalent among change strategists (m=5.8), followed by agents (m=4.9), it is also salient among the academic recipients (m=3.9). A quote reflecting this theme, “The need for change was correctly perceived” was representative, showing support for the process two years after the initiative’s inception.

We learned that coercion used to subordinate the academic identity did not preclude support for the changes, even from the academic recipients. This suggests some level of success, but the liabilities for the use of this strategy emerged in other themes, particularly the notion that academics perceived no change (e.g., *Organization Inertia*). It was no surprise that quotes by military strategists and agents reflected strong support for the initiative: “...each of the institutes is aligned...with some part of the Navy’s war fighting organization structure;” “Buy in with the general vision;” “(It was) time to reinvigorate the place;” “The Superintendent saw very clearly and I think communicated that;” “It was very critical that he (the Superintendent) grab the bull by the horns and go forward.”

Cultural Conflict is a theme depicting a clash between academic and military values, norms, behaviors, or attitudes. The agents, members of military identity subgroup, served as go-betweens in the process and were aware of this concern (m=1.7). The most frequent mentions, however, were present from representatives of the two organizational

identity subgroups, the technical core of academic recipients (m=2.9) and management, the military strategists (m=3.0). Representative quotes highlighting the distinctiveness and conflictive situation were: “I didn’t have any good feeling about the military particularly;” “There is not one culture at this school (name omitted);” “you’ve got...entities...there’s friction between them;” “The Navy thinks....but the academic culture thinks....;” “The case in the academic world...;” and that there is “another whole level of management on the mezzanine.”

Lack of Trust in Leadership was a theme salient among academic recipients (m=2.5). For this theme we chose the term trust, i.e. willingness to accept the risk of relying on another party (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, see also Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995) because trust is necessary for cooperation and based upon perceptions of ability. This theme describes the perception that leadership at the school is weak, and that there is distrust, doubt, and disagreement with the leader’s vision. No surprise that there is virtually no representation of this among the military strategists (m=0.3). What is interesting is that this theme is reflected in both the recipients (m=2.5) and agents (m=2.0). Quotes express this lack of trust in leaders: “The leadership on campus does not know how universities work;” “They’ve (leaders) had particularly little influence;” “They (leaders) don’t really know how universities work;” and “The people that have been chosen (to lead) are not capable.” While the aforementioned referred contextually to the military leadership, this quote was offered by the change strategist: “The civilian leadership on the campus has been poor in the last 10 years.”

The theme *Misalignment of Organizational Processes and Goals* reflects the perception of incongruence between the change actions and structures and the

organization's goals. In other words, many did not agree with the new organizational structure because it did not provide suitable incentives, it separated those who needed to work together, or it interfered with academic freedom. For example, one participant described the realignment as follows, "It caused separations that hadn't been there under the old system." Most interesting is there is almost complete agreement in frequency on this theme between the change roles and organizational identities (military and academic), each participant mentioning the theme twice (based upon frequency means). "The school is in a certain state of internal turmoil;" "We were grouped with the wrong set;" "The business school is kept separate from the others;" "The business school was an example of a restructuring that produced bigger divisions."

A theme used to describe the perception that a top-down approach was used to create the change was *Authoritative Control*. While strategists took hold of their position of authority, they were keenly aware of their use of control (m=3.0). Both recipients (m=2.0) and agents (m=1.6) made mention of this as well, but typically linked this point with a negative association, as represented by this quote, "He's pushed things hard and he doesn't listen to people very well." Others remarked: "(He's)...getting down to too low a level inside the school;" "(He's)...too detailed a level of involvement;" "(He)...injects himself in too many decisions;" "He never collaborates with people;" "He is always in this send mode instead of receive mode;" "(He's) not a very good listener;" and "(He)...forced it (change) on the organization."

Academic Insularity was most frequently mentioned by the recipients (m=1.8) to describe how they must focus on their own scholarly agenda. One comment, "I try to stay insulated from that and stay out of the inevitable tension between the faculty and

administration,” shows how academics, as the deleted organizational identity, worked to insulate themselves from the process. This was observed by both agents (m=0.6) and strategists (m=1.0). Many academic recipients simply separated themselves from the initiative stating: “I don’t care;” “It doesn’t affect me;” “I’m indifferent;” and “...it was a hassle to the people involved.”

Organizational Inertia reflected the lack of change or the view that little impact resulted from the initiative. While strategists and agents made no mention of this theme, the recipients elevated comments in this regard nearly twice in each interview (m=1.7). Taken together with the first theme, we see that while there may have been ultimate buy-in and support for the change, the recipients did not see themselves as the object of change. Several quotes succinctly summarize this view, “I think life goes on much as it did before;” and “I don’t think the realignment really has any affect on them (cultural values).”

Process Engagement is described as being a part of the change process, or being involved in facilitating the process indirectly or directly. This theme was held most demonstratively by those participants representative of the military identity. Agents averaged nearly four mentions of this theme in each interview (m=3.9), followed by strategists (m=2.5). As the implementers of the change initiative, agents voiced active engagement. The academic recipients, while not reflecting a strong sense of engagement (m=1.3), showed signs of post initiative engagement. Quotes by strategists and agents, however, showed demonstrative inclusion: “I have interacted...and been involved;” “(We) proposed a major reorganization of the whole division;” “I was on the committee;” and “We (agents) were empowered process ownership.”

One participant remarked, “I honestly don’t know whether or not the change will enable the school to survive,” which encapsulates the theme of *Anxiety toward Process and External Pressures*. Largely expressed by the strategists (m=2.5), this theme describes the apprehension experienced due to the process of change. Specifically, those expressing this theme spoke about the instability and additional workload that stemmed from the process. Here again, we see that the change role was more influential than organizational identity in that both recipients (m=1.2) and agents (m=1.4), representing the academic and military identities, were roughly the same in terms of this theme.

Given the use of the deletion strategy and coercive mode, it is not surprising that recipients did not see themselves as being a part of the change process or see any change in themselves (see *Organizational Inertia*). As a result of the academics not becoming part of the change, we can see why anxiety was experienced by strategists. This anxiety was expressed by strategists: “I have concern within parts of the campus;” “the school (name omitted) is in a state of turmoil.” In considering the future, strategists were still worried after their initiative: “Can we survive this BRAC process?;” “The new Superintendent will likely bring additional change upon arrival;” and they described their efforts as “centrifugal forces of worry.”

Frequent expressions of *Loyalty to the Organization* were largely from the strategists (m=2.5). This theme describes having loyalty towards the school, the belief that the organization has value, and support for the organizational mission. There is some presence of this theme among military agents (m=1.3) with minimal mention from academic recipients (m=0.6). Representative quotes reflect organizational members’ loyalty to the organization: “The school (name omitted) has a lot that it can bring to the

Navy and the services;” “I think the institute is enormously valuable;” “I think it’s very important to have a solid graduate program in the military;” “Convince the Navy of the value of this institution to the Navy;” and “I think the pieces are there for a strong future.”

The *Support for Current State* refers to the perception that things were fine the way they were before the change. A quote representing this theme was, “I don’t know why anybody thought it was necessary to realign.” As one would expect, no strategists mentioned this theme, however, agents evidenced some support for this concern (m=0.4) along with the recipients (m=0.6). Other quotes supporting this theme included: “...it was unnecessary (the change);” “This is not the first realignment we have had over the years;” “Life goes on much as it did before;” “You’ll go there for three years and then you’ll leave and nothing will have changed;” “I definitely don’t think it was necessary from my perspective;” and “I don’t know why anybody thought it was necessary to realign.”

Interestingly, despite possessing *Authoritative Control*, there was also a sense of *Lack of Power*. While not a frequently mentioned theme, its presence is worth noting as it describes the perception that participants in all categories (including strategists) felt personally insignificant in the process of change. Said differently, regardless of their authority there was the feeling that their position lacked the ability to make an impact in the organization, described by the academic recipients (m=0.3) as, “The faculty has essentially no power here.” Other comments included: “Overall I would say I didn’t have much input;” “At the school (name omitted), the faculty have less power than other faculties;” and “(We are) stuck in the middle.” Because the organization’s hierarchy extends beyond the school to its larger organizational identity (DOD), strategists (m=0.5)

and agents (m=0.4) expressed some of the same concerns.

Results Overview. Upon review of the themes in aggregate, although they saw the need for change, the academic recipients expressed that the organization was seemingly effective in its current state (prior to the change). For example, all programs had links to their respective defense sponsors who periodically conducted curriculum reviews. They saw little results from the initiative and did not feel like they were engaged in the process. They insulated themselves from the effort and, while ultimately willing to support it, did not see themselves as having changed. The academics expressed little loyalty toward the organization and lacked trust in the military leadership.

Noteworthy, while organizational identity was not considered a specific theme, the transcripts made it quite clear that the academic recipients had a different organizational identity from military strategists and agents. The academic recipients made comments reflective of their identity such as, “We are mostly a research institute that still has a school” or “I think of us as the Navy’s youngest and newest research laboratory.” In contrast, military strategists and agents referred to the organization as a “corporate university” in recognition of its goal to support and align with the Navy’s military mission.

While agents were generally representative of the military identity, due to their role implementing the change, they apparently served as the conduit or the bridge between strategists and recipients. They tended to reflect some modest indication of all the themes with the propensity to be in alignment with the strategists, including more engagement in the process. They were highly engaged as implementers, but also aligned with the recipients when, for example, they expressed a lack of confidence in leadership,

almost as low as the recipients.

Strategists, as expected, had no satisfaction with the status quo. They perceived that change occurred but expressed anxiety about the process. While they created the change, they too had some concerns about its alignment with the organization's goals. They may have felt the imposition of control by their DOD external stakeholders. Finally, they perceived the highest sense of cultural conflict, feeling the resistance of their imposed deletion strategy.

In summary, all change roles and both organizational identities seemed to agree with the need for realignment, but that the rapid transformation initiative did not fit with the organizational goals. Moreover, the academic recipients, as the technical core of the organization, did not feel any changes were produced from the initiative. Our findings also suggest agreement that authoritative power was imposed to create the change, yet none of the groups, including strategists, felt that they had power. Finally, all agree that the rapid transformation process elevated cultural conflict.

Discussion

Transformation involves creating shifts within the organization, at every level, including the organization's culture. Differences in culture are associated with differences in organizational identities, each culture expressing their image as the organizational identity. The organization we studied, like many military organizations, has civilian members. As such, DOD leaders, in their efforts to seek rapid transformation throughout their organizations, would do well to consider the specialized identities existing within their management domain. We found support for the existence of multiple identities with well-defined cultures. Management shared their military identity and

culture with the school's major external environmental stakeholder, where structure is based upon hierarchical control. In this culture, rank, authority, teamwork and following orders are almost in complete opposition to the culture of academia, where collegiality, collaboration, independence and dialogue are cultural norms. In this case, management allied with the strength of its main stakeholder and subordinated the technical core, the academic recipients. In this initiative both identity subgroups were keenly aware that *Authoritative Control* was used to drive the change.

With the themes of *Agreement with Realignment* and *Loyalty to the Organization* we learned there were two specialized organizational identities, yet there was a moderate level of synergy between them, which could have possibly been elevated (via aggregation or integration). Although time was an issue, we wondered why the leader chose to impose a deletion strategy over other alternatives. Pratt and Foreman recommend the deletion strategy when support, legitimacy, or strategic value of the identity is low, resource constraints are high and compatibility, interdependence, and diffusion are low. There appeared to be support for change stemming from the academic technical core. Given this information, we believe that with modest amounts of technical core inclusion in the transformation process, their support could have been leveraged rather than deleted. It is possible that management, largely belonging to the military identity which values authority, may have been blind to the value of other organizational identities and cultures.

While we consider the urgency of survival, the deletion strategy was imposed using a coercive mode (Dunphy & Stace, 1988) without input from the recipients and the change plan was presented as a *fait accompli*. Although the coercive mode is perhaps in alignment with military culture, and may be the tendency for leaders of DOD rapid

transformation, this strategy is certainly not exclusive to the military. Dunphy and Stace suggest the coercive mode is actually appropriate for dictatorial transformative change when the organization no longer fits with its objectives, there is no time for participation, there is no support within the organization for radical change, yet radical change is necessary for survival and fulfillment of basic mission (1988). Our results suggest these contingencies were present, except there was *Agreement with Realignment* among recipients. This signal of support suggests a collaborative mode could have been used with a charismatic transformation strategy. This approach may have avoided the negative outcomes (e.g., *Lack of Trust in Leadership* and *Anxiety toward the Process and External Pressures*). Moreover, other aspects of the collaborative mode may have elevated other desirable outcomes. By valuing the academic identity Strategists could have decreased resistance and increased confidence, and recipients may have actually become engaged in the process of transformation instead of insulating themselves from it.

In this specialized identity scenario, the leader shared the identity and culture of its major external environmental stakeholder, which was different from the technical core. Engagement in collaboration requires the ability to hold in abeyance the values and norms of one's own identity and culture, which may not be sufficient to infuse transformation in multiple identity organizations. The fixed boundary structure and hierarchical nature of the military (rather than permeable and flat) may preclude leaders from accessing multiple views. Valuing views held by other organizational identities requires empathy, mindfulness, reflection, and dialogue. Without valuing and including other views, values, and attitudes, coercive modalities may be the natural default for many military leaders. For this reason, strategists may have assumed the coercive mode

would be effective, overestimating the potential for success without careful consideration of the specialized organization identities.

Proposition 1: Managers with a specialized identity under urgency of survival will be more likely to attempt the deletion of another specialized identity using coercion during rapid transformation.

The indications and implications of using a deletion strategy and coercive mode are never as clear-cut as ideally described in the literature. At the end of the day, however, management must make tradeoffs given the information, resources, and context of each situation and ultimately choose a strategy. We now turn to the potential costs and lost opportunities of using a deletion strategy and coercive mode to create rapid transformation in a dual identity organization.

Impacts of Coercion. The organization under study possessed two key identities with clearly defined cultures. Our results suggest a high level of awareness of *Cultural Conflict*, particularly between strategists and recipients. Change agents had the lowest cultural conflict, possibly because they were close to both groups. Agents, as the middlemen, while generally holding a military identity, are in a better position to develop an understanding and appreciation of both identities and cultures. Our findings show that rather than achieving transformation and cultural shift through deletion, the use of deletion through coercion heightened cultural conflict, which could slow or stall the transformation process. Organizational identity operates at both the conscious and unconscious level and, as such, use of the deletion strategy can be both an overt and symbolic move to underscore the lack of value for those individuals, and the norms and values that distinguish their group. Prior research suggests unless the existing specialized identity can be deleted fully, by literally chopping it off (Reger et al., 1998), cultural

conflict is a likely outcome. Thus we propose:

Proposition 2: Managers with a specialized identity who attempt the deletion of another specialized identity, without complete removal of those members, will increase cultural conflict during rapid transformation.

Because strategists did not involve recipients (i.e., academic technical staff), as evidenced by the force of authority used to impose transformation, recipients were unlikely to participate. We observed the outcome of lack of engagement was *Academic Insularity*, suggestive that lack of participation and inclusion elevates resistance by the recipients. This is supported by the *Organizational Inertia* expressed by the academic/recipients of the technical core, while not present for the military management, represented by strategists and agents. In addition, recipients exhibited limited *Process Engagement* and substantial *Support for the Current State*. This leads us to propose:

Proposition 3: Managers with a specialized identity, who attempt the deletion of another specialized identity using coercion, are likely to increase resistance during rapid transformation.

Unlike the agents, the military strategists expressed their lack of value toward the academic organizational identity by deleting it without shared dialogue. As a result, the leader strategists of the initiative were not trusted by the recipients or by their own appointed military/agents, as expressed in the theme *Lack of Confidence in Leadership*.

As a result of this finding, we propose:

Proposition 4: Managers with a specialized identity, who attempt the deletion of another specialized identity using coercion, are likely to reduce trust in leadership during rapid transformation.

Lost Opportunities. The cost of using a deletion strategy via coercion includes the loss of opportunities not realized. We contend that prospects may have been realized with the application of an aggregation or integration strategy, via collaborative modalities. The

aggregation and integration strategies differ from the deletion strategy by increasing synergy between organizational identities. In this situation, increased synergy between these two groups could have assisted academics to better understand the military stakeholders (sponsors, clients and students) and to better achieve the organization's goals and support the Navy's military mission. Similarly, an increased understanding of the value of the academic organizational identity could have elevated the military's understanding of academics, and to consider the product of their research and applied scholarship toward advancing their goal of educating military leaders. Creating greater synergy and organizational learning through shared scholarship could have had an exponential effect, multiplying the benefits of the military's research investment.

The lost opportunities of synergy between organizational identities can also be seen in the theme *Loyalty to the Organization*. While the strategists, and to some extent the agents, mentioned their loyalty to the mission, very few of the recipients stated similar sentiment. From the recipients' point of view, an organization without the academic identity would have less capability in achieving the military mission. Thompson (1967) proposes the organization must protect the technical core from the external environment. This proposal is directed toward another function of leadership; to protect the strengths of specialized identities within the organization's technical core. If management does not recognize or value the culture of its technical core, they may unnecessarily delete a valuable asset and critically reduce the organization's ability to respond to future environmental demands. This could adversely impact the organization's long-term success, although these concerns must be tempered with the need to attend to immediate survivability. Given our findings and prior theory, we propose:

Proposition 5: Managers with a specialized identity, who attempt the deletion of another specialized identity using coercion, are likely to decrease loyalty to the organization during rapid transformation.

The theme *Misalignment of Organizational Processes and Goals* also indicates the potential for lost opportunity. All three groups involved with the change, including strategists, mentioned that the new organization did not align with the organization's goals. Perhaps if an aggregation strategy via collaboration had been used, a more appropriate organizational structure could have been created. We propose that choosing to delete a valuable organizational identity instead of choosing to increase synergy will result in lost opportunities, stated as:

Proposition 6: Managers with a specialized identity, who attempt the deletion of another specialized identity using coercion, when each of these specialized identities are interdependent, are likely to diminish collaborative opportunities during rapid transformation.

Finally, the rapid transformation took its toll on the strategists who had high *Anxiety toward the Process and External Pressures*. Two years after taking control and introducing the initiative, strategists were uncertain if the organizational change would achieve its goal to ensure the organization's survival. It is possible that use of deletion and coercion reduced the chances of success of the organizational transformation. If the identity selected for deletion is the technical core, even though it is a specialized identity, management is unlikely to be successful in chopping off the technical core or changing its' organizational identity, which is likely to be associated with its' professional identity. Hence, deleting the organizational identity of the technical core is unlikely to lead to successful or rapid transformation.

Proposition 7: Managers with a specialized identity, who attempt the deletion of another specialized identity using coercion, are likely to increase resistance, lack of loyalty, and cultural conflict, while decreasing

trust in management, and collaborative opportunities, which ultimately hampers effective transformation.

To view our propositions collectively, we outline a theoretical model depicting rapid transformation and the costs of using a deletion strategy via coercion in a dual identity organization (see Figure 3).

Recommendations

In review of our findings and theoretical propositions, we now consider what insights we can provide to leaders as they undertake rapid transformation, desiring systemic and cultural change within organizations with specialized subgroup identities. Upon review of the data, and given our expertise in organization change strategy and implementation, we recommend the following specialized identity change management strategies:

- ***Identify and acknowledge the value of pre-existing organizational identities, particularly those of the technical core.*** Managers holding specialized identities should be aware they may have a propensity to use coercion or to delete identities that are not their own. Management cannot assume the organizational identity they hold is the only valid or valuable identity in the organization. As we have shown, it is quite likely that the technical core will hold a different and possibly complimentary identity compared to management. Managers should conduct an analysis of organizational identities, looking for specialized identities held by other subgroups. They can then identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with each specialized identity and choose a strategy and mode that balances the short term need for survival against the potential contributions to long-term success. Managers should also consider how much flexibility will be required in the future and the extent to which synergy may be beneficial.
- ***Use a hybrid strategy, consider coercive collaboration.*** Collaboration takes time because collaborative processes can get bogged down. Subgroups may hang on to their positions because they have no urgency or motivation to make concessions needed to achieve an overall organizational goal. This can lead to political decision-making, when people put more attention toward fighting the enemy from within, rather than turning their energies toward fighting those enemies external to the organization (Serven & Gregor, 2002). To avoid this situation, coercion can be used to establish a planned decision making process which imposes the overarching goal, the timeframe, and the default decision to be implemented

unless a better solution can be found. Within this framework, subgroups can be consulted and challenged to find better solutions, given the timeframe needed for survival.

- ***Increase synergy, encourage partnering.*** Unless the subgroup holding the unwanted specialized organizational identity can be chopped off, deletion will be difficult and the organization might benefit from including those identities through aggregation or integration strategies, i.e. increasing synergy. Expend resources to develop means of organizing, linking, and maintaining secondary identities. Initiate and reward integration and alignment efforts between dual identity members. Manage multiple identities through the creation of new beliefs (e.g., develop and maintain shared myths, stories, and rituals that mediate internal conflicts and engender shared support of members). Management's example of partnering with subgroups could increase buy-in and minimize personal biases and blind spots.
- ***If contextual factors predispose a leader to prioritize one identity over another, communicate the reasons for the chosen identity strategy and follow-through with processes designed to ease the transition for the sublimated identity.*** If an identity is subordinated, be honest, forthright, and thoughtful; enact communication strategies to explain the underlying reasons (e.g., real or perceived higher mandates and timelines). This type of approach would purposefully respect the identity and the maturity of subordinated group members and serve to at least clarify intentions. While it may be difficult for the subgroup to accept that their specialized identity is not critical to the organization's future, understanding the rationale could overcome member concerns that management are simply ignoring or unwittingly deleting a subgroup identity. If contextual factors predispose a leader to prioritize one identity over another, expending the necessary resources to facilitate constructive dialogue among the various identities may preserve (or salvage) relations for future rebuilding.
- ***If forcing a fusion of multiple identities is deemed impractical, then define the organization at a higher level of abstraction (e.g., a new meta-identity).*** This strategy aims at melding specialized subgroup identities into an integrated organizational identity. Elevate the collaborative organizational identity, determine what each identity has in common and use these shared strengths as leverage for immediate movement. In this case, elevate defense-based research and teaching focused on force development and thus contributing toward the leadership of world freedom.

Conclusion

Handling rapid transformation requires leaders to carefully examine their motives and balance them with both short and long-term considerations. If situations within the DOD are not addressed with mindfulness, leaders may risk the loss of essential

components of their organizations, identities that may be necessary for long-term success. The propositions set forth in this work provide insight for leaders and managers attempting to implement rapid transformation in organizations with multiple identities, particularly those where management is characterized by a specialized identity different from that of the organization's technical core. Our recommendations are offered to support of those who may implement mandates for urgent change, while simultaneously working to preserve their central, distinctive, and enduring cultures.

Given the exploratory nature of our study, the results are largely speculative. Nevertheless, we have broadened scholarship in terms of understanding the application of the deletion strategy using the coercion mode to infuse rapid transformation in organizations with multiple identities. The existing configuration approach (Pratt & Foreman, 2000), is augmented with a more granular view of the deletion strategy with outcomes influenced by specialized identities and change roles (change strategists, agents, and recipients). Since the DOD transformation is slated to continue through 2020, our analysis serves as an important feedback loop for DOD and government leaders. Our work provides an important window toward the future, as literally hundreds of similar U.S. defense organizations are engaging in, slated for, or are seeking transformational change.

The major theoretical contribution of this article is the recognition that many organizations, like corporate universities, can have a specialized management organizational identity subgroup. But, different from other subgroups, if the management subgroup does not recognize the value of other organization identities and pre-existing support, it has the power to coerce and may unnecessarily try to delete them. A second

contribution is a deeper understanding of the effects of using coercion and deletion in rapid transformation. While these effects are not completely surprising (e.g. resistance) the avoidable loss of interdependent opportunities is an important finding. Finally, our contribution to leaders of change offer a recommendations that go beyond proposing avoidance of deletion via coercion, but offer suggestive advice on how to achieve a smoother, thoughtful, and more rapid transformation if such strategies and means must be employed.

Environmental changes often make rapid transformation necessary for organizational survival. Organizational identity shapes organizational culture and strategies that tap identity are powerful tools for organizational change. In specialized, multiple identity organizations, particularly where the management identity differs from the technical core, there can be a tendency to implement a deletion strategy using the coercion mode to obtain quick results. Our results indicate that deleting an organizational identity can increase resistance and cultural conflict and decrease confidence in management, synergy, and future collaborative opportunities. These impacts may eventually outweigh the initial benefits of speedy and compliant change. They may not only have a negative effect on systemic change and transformation, their reverberations may produce unintended consequences. We acknowledge certain organizations, such as the military, have values that make the use of coercion plausible and/or potentially effective. But where multiple identities exist, leaders of rapid transformation may create more risk for their initiative and potentially become less effective if they do not consider the value of other organizational identities and the actual values of those subgroups. To promote greater effectiveness, even in times of urgency and limited resources, we have

described alternative actions that may increase the success of transformational initiatives in other multiple identity organizations.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire Protocols

A. Change Recipient

- 1) Why do you think NPS realigned recently? In your opinion was it necessary? Favorable or unfavorable? Why?
- 2) Do you know what Joint Vision 2020 is? If so, please describe.
- 3) Was the change congruent with the environment and culture at NPS? If not, why?
- 4) Has the realignment affected the values of the faculty at NPS? If so how? If not, why?
- 5) Has the realignment affected the values of the students at NPS? If so how? If not, why?
- 6) Do you think change has occurred at NPS? If yes, what tells you that change has occurred?
- 7) Do you think that the institution has reorganized? If yes, is that the main feature of the change?
- 8) Did you experience a change in your role as a faculty member? If yes, can you describe this please?
- 9) At the time of the change, what were you thinking and feeling?
- 10) Were you a part of the process?
- 11) What do think is necessary in the future for NPS to survive as a valuable asset while fitting into the unique structure and culture of DoD?
- 12) What other thoughts do you have about your experience as a member of an organization, as you were present during this process?

B. Change Implementer

- 1) What is your perception of RADM Ellison's vision for NPS regarding realignment and transformation?
- 2) Why do you think you were selected as Dean?
- 3) What do you think your role is in transforming the organization?

- 4) What direction, if any, were you given from the Superintendent or anyone else?
- 5) How did you proceed in creating the change within the organization?
- 6) Was this change congruent with the environment and culture at NPS?
- 7) What did you hope for as you unveiled your plan to the faculty?
- 8) How did the faculty respond? How did it go?
- 9) How would you grade the progress of realignment and transformation at NPS to date?
- 10) Has the change impacted cross-institutional relationships?
- 11) Has the realignment impacted institutional values or the culture at NPS? How?
- 12) Given that NPS is a non-traditional academic institution, what would it look like to you if we were completely successful? What would it take to get there, and is it compatible with survivability?

C. Superintendent

- 1) What led you to realize that a change was necessary at NPS?
- 2) Think back to when this came about. What was happening at the time in the Navy, DOD and here at NPS?
- 3) Upon your decision to begin the change process, who did you select as your change agents, i.e. who was the team that you chose to make this happen and why did you choose them?
- 4) What guidance did you give them, if any?
- 5) How did it go? What happened?
- 6) How did you know this, what represents this outcome to you?
- 7) After beginning this journey, what is your perception of NPS now?
- 8) What is necessary in the future to keep NPS aligned with DOD transformation and the goals of Joint Vision 2020?

Table 1. Themes by Change Role and Specialized Identities

Theme	Frequency of Mentions (mean)		
	Recipients/ Academic n=10	Agents/ Military n=7	Strategists/ Military n=4
Agreement with Realignment	3.9	4.9	5.8
Cultural Conflict	2.9	1.7	3.0
Lack of Trust in Leadership	2.5	2.0	0.3
Misalignment of Organizational Goals	2.1	2.1	2.0
Authoritative Control	2.0	1.6	3.0
Academic Insularity	1.8	0.6	1.0
Organizational Inertia	1.7	0	0
Process Engagement	1.3	3.9	2.5
Anxiety toward Process & External Pressures	1.2	1.4	2.5
Loyalty to the Organization	0.6	1.3	2.5
Support for Current State	0.6	0.4	0
Lack of Power	0.3	0.4	0.5

Figure 1. Organizational Chart Before Reorganization

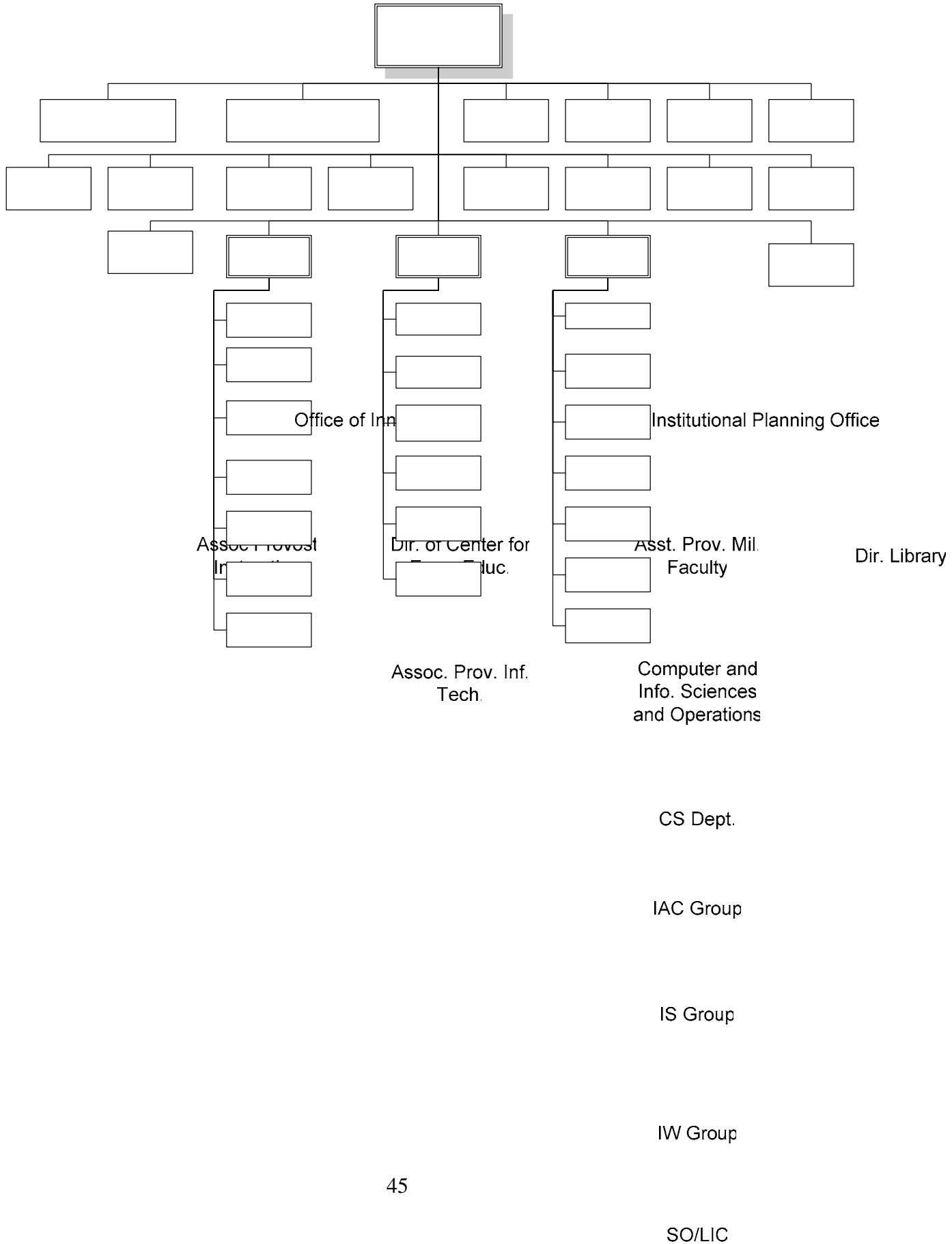
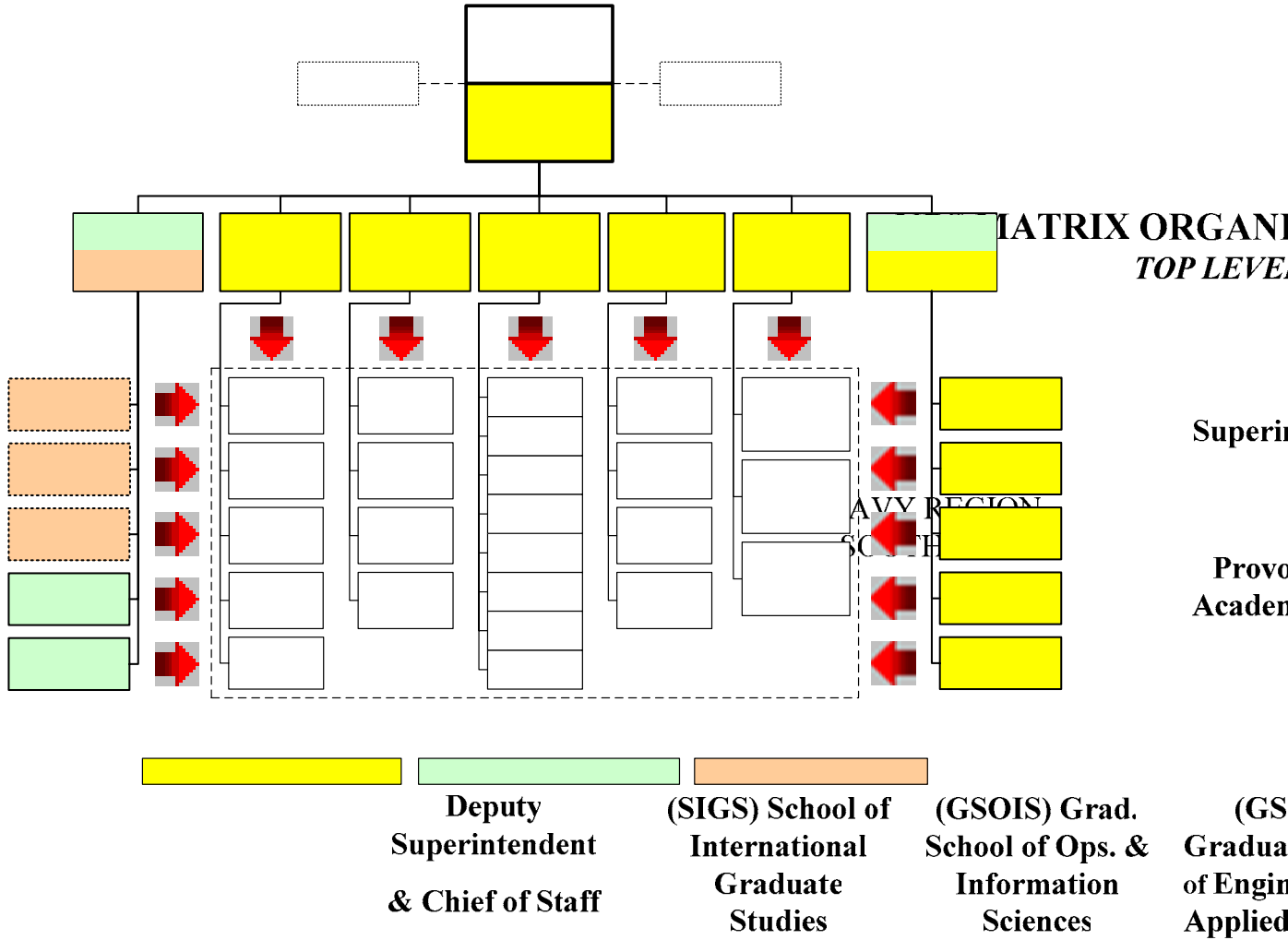


Figure 2. Organizational Chart After Reorganization



Facilities,
NAVY REGION
SOUTHWEST

Security,
NAVY REGION
SOUTHWEST

HRO,
NAVY REGION
SOUTHWEST

**Comptroller /
Business Affairs**

Internl Grad.
Programs
(IGPO)

National
Security
Affairs (NSA)

Ctr Civil-Mil.
Relations
(CCMR)

Ctr Homeland
Defense &

Computer
Science
Department

Defense
Analysis
Department

Information
Science
Department

Operations
Research

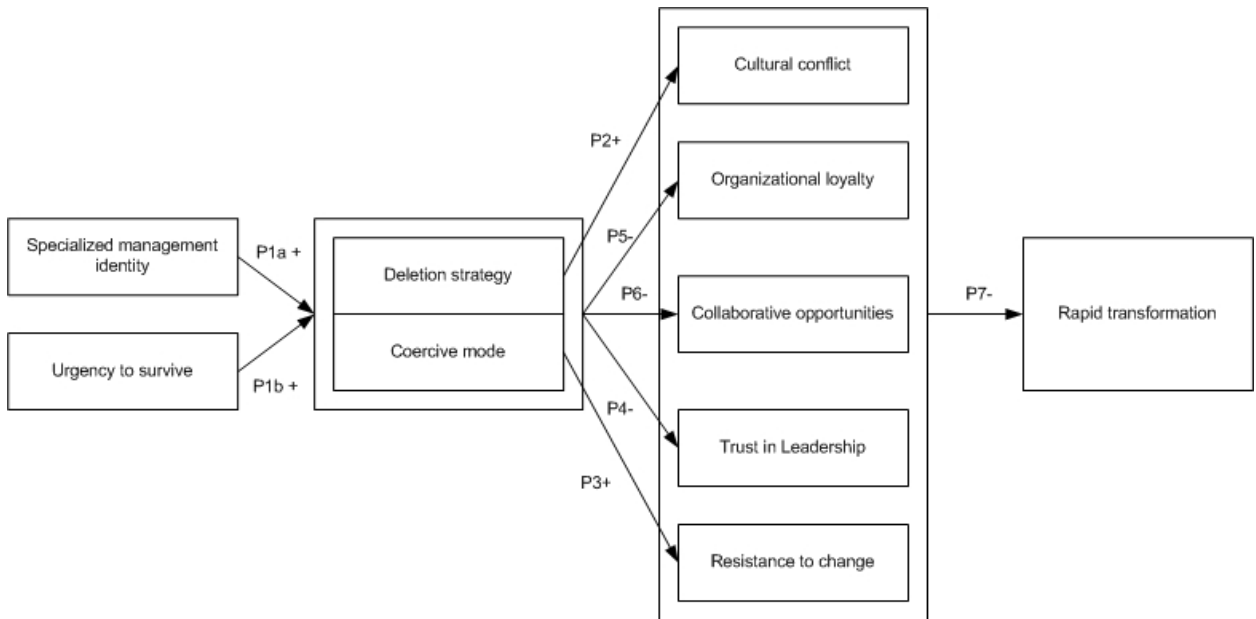
El. & C
Eng.
Mathe

Depart
Mech.&
Eng.

Meteo
Depart
Oceano

Phy
Depart

Figure 3. Specialized Management Identity and the Use of Coercion to Effect Rapid Transformation



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