

## “Is Becoming a Researcher Some Kind of Role-playing” - Roles of the Researcher in the Process of Forming the Identity

*Annikka Tapani*

### ABSTRACT

The first seminar as a PhD student: it was the first impression for me of the way to become a researcher. The roles taken during the research process formed my identity in many ways: sometimes I was like a tourist, sometimes a spy, a missionary or a prisoner. All the roles taken during the research process formed the identity in one way or another. Some roles are of more a social origin, some are more individualistic. In this article it is revealed how the roles can form the identity growth process while conducting a study.

The research question in this article is: how do the different roles taken during the research process reflect on the researcher's identity growth? The data consists of textual material on the research process. The content analysis is used as an analysis method. This article aims to contribute to the discussion about whether the formation of identity is of a social or of an individual origin.

**Key words:** Identity, Roles, Content Analysis

### Introduction

The process started in the year 2002 when I was getting ready for my first seminar as a PhD student. My colleague asked me to be prepared for questions about the philosophical basis of my research. I read a lot and prepared myself for scientific discussion: the gate to the scientific world had opened and I was ready to take the challenge. This was my first step on the road to becoming a researcher. Being very enthusiastic about this possibility, I was very disappointed after the first seminar: no questions about the core points. I only got questions of whether we had some problems in our polytechnic. My research was about the formation of collective identity in the polytechnic.

Once I had the door opened, I had to go on. I wanted to know the core points of how to do science. I was happy to find a good “home” for my research in the phenomenological way of thinking. I was to study the concept of collectivity using critical incidents in our work

community (Patton 1990, 182-183). Phenomenology seemed to be the answer for my questions: in the phenomenological point of view a phenomenon can be seen in a pure way, the way it is. The individual experience is essential for understanding the core of the phenomenon. (Gorner 2001, 546; Priest 2002.) In my licentiate thesis I used the phenomenological way to see the core point of the phenomenon “we”; in this article I want to continue by using phenomenological way combined with content analysis to analyze the identity formation process during the steps of the research process.

The research question in this article is: how do the different roles taken during the research process reflect on the researcher's identity growth? As described above, I was very eager to be a part of the scientific community but as a novice I knew nothing about what it was like. So I had my dreams and in this article I will describe how the research process and the different roles taken during the process formed my identity as a researcher, and maybe as a person as well. The aim of this article is to take

part in the discussion of the identity forming process: is the formation of an identity of a social or of an individual origin. That question has interested the researchers in the field of social sciences for years (see e.g. Burr 2004).

The framework for the research process is the search for the truth: all the time I have been interested in finding the core point of the phenomenon "we-ness" and finding its true meaning. In thinking about the truth and its existence I got to know the realistic theory of truth (Puolimatka 2002). I began to think that it is absurd to study a phenomenon if I already think that it does not exist at all. It is absurd to do research on something that one can maybe never find or is always changing or re-constructed. In these early years I was so sure that the phenomenon of collective identity, "we-ness", must be "somewhere out there" and its existence does not depend on if we see it or not (e.g. Kalli 2005, 10). It was a fascinating thought that the "we-ness" is and stays forever no matter what changes happen. In the end of this article I will comment also on this claim.

In this article the methodology is understood in its wide way. The starting point is to understand the possibilities and restrictions of one study and its relation to the real world and other "real worlds". (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 11.) I am using here as an empiric setting. I am revealing my roles in the research process. The data analysis is done by using the content analysis method. Next I will take an overview of the theoretical framework. Then I will explain the methodology used. After that I will discuss the results of this study and its evaluation.

### **The Identity as a Concept**

The identity of a person is something that is shaped during time in unconscious processes and its unity always includes some imagination. It always remains incomplete, is always in a process and develops all the time. Thus, we should not talk about the

identity but study identifications and see them as on-going processes. Identity has its origin in the deficiency of its unity in us: it is realized by the habits outside of us through which we think the others see us. According to Hall (1999, 39), we react to the expectations of our environment and try to develop our being according to them.

There is also some learning involved in the identity forming processes: the identities are produced and we have to learn that there are also other kinds of identities. Hall says that, for example, the "black identity" is not found ready and waiting but it is produced and delineated. To be a "black" is an identity that has to be learned. It has to do with the logic of separation: to be a "black" requires the understanding that there are also "whites" and "browns". (Hall 1999, 12-13.)

Identities must be learned and found but in several cases they overlap. Rummens (2003) suggests that identity is easily defined by sex, age, professional status, nationality or language. Identity is some kind of a stamp but identification has to do with categorising action. I, you and us, which is formed from these two possibilities, are a part of the basic understanding of the person's identity and its salience to the individualistic conception of self. Individual and social identification help a person and also groups to find their places in the wider social framework.

Sometimes is it up to the person to decide whether the group identity is needed. There are some special cases when a person must consider if he / she can cope with the situation by him / herself or with the group. A person considers his / her abilities to cope with the situation and compares the chances to the abilities of the group. This kind of a consideration is called self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). Sometimes there is also a need for joining the group in order to achieve changes in the society. This kind of an identity is called a project identity (Castells 2000).

The identity forming process can originally be driven from individualistic needs but sometimes there is a need for finding a common identity.

## Tapani

There are some researchers, such as Eskola (1984), who assume that the community where a person lives, as well as the person's position and function in it, play a big role in forming the identity; the rest is a result of coincidences and various kinds of occurrences. Next I will take an overview of the concept of the social identity.

### 2.1 The Social Identity

To be a member of a group is said to be an origin for the identity but it can also be a ground for a separation: sometimes a group wants to separate itself from other groups and sometimes it may even dehumanize the members of the outgroup. (Helkama, Myllyniemi, Liebkind 1998, 291). This is said to be in direct relation to self-respect although there are some contradictory studies about that. Anyway, one of the essential tools for separation is language: the language is a forceful tool for creating the identity but also for separating the outgroup. Not all groups have the same power and status and the social identity is not always forming self-respect positively. The members of a group do not have the same power even in the forming of the identity of the group. (Ahlman 1967; Kaunismaa 1997; Helkama, Myllyniemi, Liebkind 1998, 311-312.)

In Harre's concept of social identity project a person tries to achieve an esteemed status in his / her community. To succeed in this he / she must have internalized the social heritage of his / her community. After that he / she must have the other members convinced about his / her values. Through this project the person constructs his / her privacy and uniqueness inside the social identity. He / she does not only adopt the social elements but tries to distinguish him/herself from the others as a personal self. Harré says that in this kind of an individually based society it is expected that the individuals bring out their identity and personality. In addition to that, some individualistic ways to construct the

personality can be taken as parts of the social heritage of a community. (Ylijoki 2001, 241.)

A new way to behave can be taken as a new way to act by the whole group. All the members do not have the same power in changing the behaviour: the main point is, according to Ahlman (1967, 170), the degree of knowing the central values of collectiveness: some persons are considered more, some less members of the group and these can also vary during time. Also Kaunismaa (1997) says that there are some persons who create the identity, some assume it and some sustain what has been created. However, there still remains the question from Rummens (2003): what identities are predominant in what situations, why, and who is in charge of that. One answer to this kind of a question is offered by Brown (2000, 746-747): there is a difference between interpersonal situations and group situations: when individuals are co-operating the control in forming the identity is based on personal traits but in group situations the identity is formed via the membership of the group. As we see, Brown distinguishes the situations where people are "just" interacting from the situations where the group rules count. This also has to do with the conceptual thinking. It is interesting to think what differs a social group from a collective one. Next I will discuss this theme.

### 2.2 The Collective Identity

The social identity is easily defined by some kind of inherent features like sex, nationality or race. A person moves between the social identity groups along his lifespan; for example, different age groups or professional groups that may be the resources for identity have a different role in different times of life and a person moves from a group to another during his / her life. Some groups are defining the identity more than the others. Some groups, as well as some individuals, are more powerful in forming the identity. This was the question Rummens (2003) raised. One answer to that question may be found in distinguishing between the social and collective identities.

The collective identity is simply defined as an identity of a collective. A collective is defined as a loose group and an example of that might be a working society: a collective identity can be understood as a we-identity of a two-person collective or as a collective identity of a nationality consisting of millions of members. All we-identities between these extremes are named as collectives, too. The collective has or it forms for itself a special way to act. This common way to act is based on the common history. (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Monden, de Lima 2002; Helkama, Myllyniemi, Liebkind 1998; Kaunismaa 1997, 220-221.)

There is always something mythical in this kind of an identity. In many cases the collective identity is a part of the social establishment of the group. It is based partly on myths, but also on history and past. The identity is always constructed and it is based on the person's ability to see in the symbolic and linguistic expressions something that concerns him / herself. (Aarnio 1999, 12; Kaunismaa 1997, 222-223, 228-229.)

According to Mead (1962), identity constructs in human minds and in everyday action. The construction differs depending on the situation and who you are dealing with. The forming of the collective identity requires that a person reflects his / her thoughts and experiences to the attitude of the Generalized Other, gets feedback and modifies his / her behaviour according to that. To be a whole Self needs relationships to other Selves (Kuusela 2001, 69). At the same time each person modifies the attitude of the group because his / her behaviour gives a stimulus to others who then again change their behaviour according to that. The Generalized Other is made by the action of "I" and "Me" when we take the others' attitudes in our behaviour, especially those who are the significant others. These significant others can be real persons or they can be mental reflections of other persons in one's mind. (Blumer 1969, 65,68; Mead 1962, 154.)

As was discussed in the beginning of this article, there are several views to the origin of the identity. Some researchers have a more individualistic starting point to see how the identity is created, while the others stress more the collective or social points of view. In Table 1 I will present one possible way to see the identity forming process through different kinds of theoretical viewpoints.

**Table 1.** The identity forming process

Viewpoint		
Individualistic	Social	Collective
The need for completing the identity (Hall)	Social identity project (Harrè)	"I", "Me" and "the Self" processes (Mead)
Self-efficiency (Bandura) project identity (Castells)	Collectiveness (Ahلمان)	Collective identity as a concept (Kaunismaa, Aarnio)

**The Roles in Forming the Identity**

Before thinking about the roles in this special process some clarification about the concept of role is needed. According to Castells (2000,7), roles arrange activities but identities are stronger sources for meaning. Mead (1962, 254) uses the concept of role in the interaction process: through taking the role of the other a person is able to come back on himself and thus direct her own process of communication. According to Goffman, it is important to make a difference between the real person and the role: acting in a special role does not mean that a person is really like the role. Goffman remarks that the real person taken off the role is as much a presentation like the original role was. (Peräkylä 2005, 361.)

As the role framework I use here Tranquist's (2005) and Eriksson's (1982) role describing terms spy, missionary, tourist and prisoner. Tranquist and Eriksson used them in the name

## Tapani

of action research. They have studied scenarios that the interactive researcher may face. Tranquist has also studied some of the judgements, tensions and dilemmas that may occur in the immediacy of practice. Tranquist's starting point is a tale told by Eriksson and he elaborates Eriksson's metaphorical characters in terms of interactive research. (Tranquist 2005.)

The main roles in Eriksson's tale are the tourist, the spy, the missionary and the prisoner. The tourist signifies the production of knowledge and the spy illustrates the conflicts of loyalty. The missionary deals with the issues of what the researcher can and cannot affect, while the prisoner on social training addresses the fact that the researcher still remains a captive, only now under someone else's constraint. (Eriksson 1982; Tranquist 2005.) I will next carry out a short overview of these different types.

Tourism is what we call people's activities when they travel and reside in places out of their ordinary setting. Some tourists travel to sunny locations, others travel out of interest for unknown cultures. One group of tourists travel simply to be able to say that they were there. Tranquist (2005) points out that within interactive research one can probably find representatives from all these categories.

The suspicious spy can be seen as a threat to the present order. The researcher has to do a lot to convince the members of the organization of her personal and professional credibility. Reciprocal trust must be established and it is important that the spy has the allegiance of the staff or that of the administration. (Tranquist 2005).

The missionary is often perceived as a character spreading justified beliefs to others less enlightened and the word prisoner includes the meaning that one is deprived of freedom of expression or action or that someone is serving a prison sentence (Tranquist 2005).

Next I will move on to the content analysis and discuss what kinds of meanings the roles have for the researcher's work. I will also take an overview on the connection of each role with the identity forming process.

### **Content Analysis: the Roles in Forming the Researcher's Identity**

In this article I am using the theory-bound way of content analysis. Here content analysis means the aspiration to describe the content of documents by words. I am here testing the framework of the theory in a new context. There are some theoretical connections and the units of analysis are taken from the theory: the content is formed by the data but it is surrounded by the theoretical framework. (see e.g. Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 98-99, 107.) In this case there are some elements of the data-bound analysis, too: I try to "see" the implications in the data and I am working like Laine (2001) suggests: the data is described, analysed and the implications are interpreted by these means, and after this the synthesis is done. In the US tradition of content analysis there is no advice for doing it in a theory-bound way but the principle is that the analysis follows the principles of the data-bound content analysis. The difference lies in connecting the theoretical concepts and the data: in theory-bound content analysis the concepts are taken from the theory (see e.g. Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 116).

The main steps are, according to Miles and Huberman (1984), the reduction of the data, grouping of the data and creation of the theoretical concepts. In this study the theoretical concepts are taken from the theory and the main ones are the roles and the identity. I will next describe the process verbally: first I will connect the described roles with the action of the researcher and also describe the role in forming the identity. The theoretical analysis is presented in Table 2. In the next chapter I will describe the research process and the roles taken during that process. The key words are bolded in the text. The reduction is grouped in Table 3.

The tourist is somehow seen to be either curious about new places and things, or just wanting to rest

and have fun. In the role of a researcher, these points offer us different kinds of views: does the researcher want to set herself in an unknown situation and maybe even take personal risks or does she want to use the methods that she is used to and familiar with. In an unknown place and situation the tourist, as well as the researcher, may face communicative problems (see Tranquist 2005): confusion of language, discursive patterns, but also cultural differences: the tourist as well as the researcher has to adjust to unfamiliar locations.

While setting herself in new settings and unknown situations, the researcher learns also about herself and, as we can later notice, also becomes more like herself. It is typical of the tourist that even though it is nice to be abroad it is also nice to come back home. No matter how well integrated the tourist gets in the new setting, there will always be the feeling of not being completely at home. It might be compared to the feeling of a researcher who uses a method that is not completely suitable for her research style. The study goes on well but somewhere there is a feeling of not "being at home" with it. (Tranquist 2005.)

Regarding the tourist-researcher from the viewpoint of the identity forming process it can be noticed that that to be a tourist has a very social origin as far as identity is concerned: the tourist wants to see new places and learn from them but also learn something of him / herself. And last but not least: it is nice to be abroad but it is always nice to come back home. This resembles a lot Harrè's description of personal identity project: a person wants to learn from the surroundings, from other people and try to complete his / her identity. (see e.g. Ylijoki 2001) Anyway, it is important that a person herself knows what elements are needed to complete the identity. It is like a tourist: he / she sees new places and attractions but not all of them are remembered. Only the best

parts are kept along, no matter whether it is a tourist abroad or a researcher forming his / her identity in the tourist way.

Harrè's identity theory is quite like Mead's theory of the Self (Mead 1962): other persons are needed in order to become the whole Self. Mead's theory does not fit so well to the tourist way of acting because the tourist always sees new places; in forming the Self the significant others play such a role that these others cannot be just anyone but they must be significant: they must have some kind of a place in the individual's mind already. Maybe after once being abroad a tourist could use the forming of the Self theory, too: maybe he / she has found some significant others who later form his / her identity and the Self. The tourist's role in forming the identity is, anyway, very social: to be curious, brave and a little bit risk-taker are the core points in the action of the tourist but also in the forming of the identity in a social way.

To be a spy creates an imaginary picture of a person who tries to find out things without herself being recognized. The role of the spy demands a lot of trust-building and also trust-keeping. If the trust is broken the results can be very hurtful and even disastrous or chaotic. To be a spy and a researcher entails a thought that something is done is secretly, or for someone's needs. Sometimes it can be a good way to reveal the real thoughts but this kind of action in doing research would raise a lot of ethical questions.

Because of the secret way to act it can be thought that the spy role in identity building is of an individualistic origin: a spy must act alone and trust only him / herself. But if the spy is not spying for only his own fun he needs somebody who gives the orders. Then the role in identity forming becomes more complicated. The role can be seen from the ingroup - outgroup position (Helkama et al. 1998): if the spy wants to be a member of some group he / she might spy for them in order to get a membership as a reward. But even then the starting point can be very individualistic: it is his / her own need to become a member of a group and fulfil his / her

## Tapani

identity this way. Then it could also be seen as a project identity (Castells 2000): a person wants some change, in this case in his / her own life, and he / she wants to become a member of some group. To spy for them is his / her personal project in order to get a member of the group make the changes he / she wishes.

As a researcher's role the missionary could be at first very impressive: the researcher comes and tells people how things should work. It has to do with authority, as one person is easy to listen to and believe while the others are not so powerful. In a long term, the missionary role can be a burden: the researcher has to know the right answers to the questions and solutions for the problems that have arisen. It can also irritate some members of the staff: if the researcher is the only one whose opinions count some may feel that their knowledge and skills are nonsense, although they may have years of experience in doing their work.

A missionary way of forming identity is very much like Harrè's identity project and its part of trying to make one's own personal traits as parts of the ways to act in the group. Like Harrè says, it is possible that some individualistic ways to construct personality can be taken as parts of the community heritage. If a missionary is powerful enough that can happen. But, as was described, the missionary way to act can also irritate the others. Anyway, the missionary in identity forming process is very sure that his / her values are the same as the collective has and he may be quite sure to have power in the group. The weakness in this kind of identity project is that there may be some resistance in the group if the missionary starts to irritate them: the missionary may be alienated from the ingroup.

Tranquist (2005) compares the role of the researcher to a prisoner when the researcher is strictly held inside academia. Tiller (2004) points out that as soon as the researcher meets the empirical settings and the people who work there she may realize that what

she thought to be the core issues are nothing but peripheral ponderings.

The prisoner likes to think in the identity forming way: if someone is held inside how could he / she form the identity? Just like the prisoner may have dreams of freedom, the prisoner in identity forming process may have dreams of becoming "a better person". While being a prisoner, this is possible via imagination and by using pictures of imagined persons. At the first look the prisoner seems very individualistic in forming his / her identity: if someone is just alone in the cell the impact of others is non-existent. But, as was said before, there may be dreams of a better future and being a better "me"; so the prisoner way in identity building is not so hopeless as it looks from the first sight. Mead's (1962) theory on the Generalised Other would fit well with the prisoner way in creating "the Self": in Mead's theory it is many times said that the significant others do not have to be really present but they can form one's identity as well by being mentally present.

In Table 2 the roles and their impact on the identity forming process are concluded. By connecting the roles with the identity forming processes I will next go on to the empiric setting: I will describe shortly the research process and then figure out what kinds of roles where present in this research process and what impact they had on the identity forming process empirically.

**Table 2** The roles and their impact on identity formation

<b>Roles</b>	Tourist	Spy	Missionary	Prisoner
<b>Theoretical connection to the identity forming process</b>	Social origin: Harre's identity theory, also some elements of Mead's	Individualistic: has to do with the ingroup - outgroup setting (e.g. Helkam	Individualistic inside the social: By this the person constructs his / her privacy	Social identity: e.g. the Generalised Other (Mead)

	s theory	a et al.)	and unique ess inside the social identity (Harré).	The context for the licentiate study was the Satakunta Polytechnic. It is an institution of professional higher education operating around the region of Satakunta in western Finland. The Satakunta Polytechnic has ten educational units located in Harjavalta, Huittinen, Kankaanpää, Pori and Rauma. In addition, the polytechnic has two separate research and development units, O'Sata - Centre for Research and Development, and CACE - Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, which operate in all five towns. The polytechnic operates under the administration of the city of Pori. The total number of students is 6417. The total number of staff members is 530, of which there are 310 full-time workers. The Satakunta Polytechnic offers education in five fields of study: Business, Fine Art and Media Studies and Tourism; Social Services and Health Care; Technology and Maritime Management. The institution was established in 1997. All of its units have not been in the polytechnic for the same time. ( www.samk.fi)
--	-------------	-----------	---	--

**Description of the Research Process: The Roles of the Researcher in this Study**

In my licentiate thesis (Tapani 2007) I studied the collective identity in the Satakunta Polytechnic, which is nowadays called the Satakunta University of Applied Sceinces. I use here the term "polytechnic" because it was the right term in those days I conducted the study there.

The polytechnics are new actors in the educational field in Finland. They have been a part of the Finnish education for about 10 years. The background for creating this new educational institution was the fact that the colleges were found to be too separated from each other. The challenge for the polytechnics is how to find a collective identity. The community of teachers is very pluralistic. (Liljander 2002a, Liljander 2002b.)

The polytechnics were meant to be an answer for the on-going changes in the Finnish working life. By this modernization the quality of the education was to get better and attention was paid to the changes in the Finnish society. The purpose of the polytechnics was to provide professional growth for the students and also to support the working life and its development. They were also to serve local regions and this was one of the things that separated them from the universities. This also made the universities notice their regional effects and possibilities. Nowadays, according to the law, the polytechnics and universities are the two parts of the Finnish higher education system. (Rask 2002, <http://finlex1.edita.fi>.)

The context for the licentiate study was the Satakunta Polytechnic. It is an institution of professional higher education operating around the region of Satakunta in western Finland. The Satakunta Polytechnic has ten educational units located in Harjavalta, Huittinen, Kankaanpää, Pori and Rauma. In addition, the polytechnic has two separate research and development units, O'Sata - Centre for Research and Development, and CACE - Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, which operate in all five towns. The polytechnic operates under the administration of the city of Pori. The total number of students is 6417. The total number of staff members is 530, of which there are 310 full-time workers. The Satakunta Polytechnic offers education in five fields of study: Business, Fine Art and Media Studies and Tourism; Social Services and Health Care; Technology and Maritime Management. The institution was established in 1997. All of its units have not been in the polytechnic for the same time. ( www.samk.fi)

Understanding the "we-ness" in the organisational context is important for many reasons. Kyrö (2005, 23) names organisational entrepreneurship as one form of entrepreneurship. Work is nowadays done mostly in teams and teams are responsible for their results (see e.g. Juuti 1998). To take responsibility of one`s work has also to do with the concept of empowerment (see e.g. Ruohotie 2001). The feeling of being a part of a team is important because then everyone feels that the work done alone and together is meaningful.

The research process itself started in the first seminar I described in the beginning. I got a possibility to have a **presentation** there. It was very exciting. It was the first **sign for me of being a member** of the scientific community. The **instructor** told me that I should read more and more; in Tranquist`s (2005) terms I felt to be a tourist in a foreign country where all the other people seemed to be familiar with each other and language used but they seemed to be curious about me and they were also friendly and helpful.



## Tapani

After reading and taking part in other seminars I started to **feel more like home** in the scientific community but because of the **difference of the studied themes** it was hard to find a real dialogue and the feeling of the tourist was still present. My instructor asked me to acquire some test answers to get to know my subject better. Because of the **instructor's main role** in this phase the feeling of the prisoner was there too: I felt I had to do as the instructor told me. It was due to my insufficient knowledge, as I see it now. I had no possibility to scientifically argue with her.

I **emailed** the test questions to chosen people in our polytechnic. At the same time I **worked** as a project manager in the central administration. Although I tried to send a happy and very positive email to my colleagues I could not help feeling like a spy while getting to know their secret feelings and thoughts. I could not act like a tourist because I had worked there for three years and it was impossible for me to take the role of the outsider. I knew that the answers were written in an honest way; I could not have had that thought if I were in a tourist role. Somehow my role was also a prisoner and a missionary; **as an officer** in the central administration my letter could be read in a "we ought to do this" way. Missionary is the one who preaches for the thing he/she thinks is the right one. Some of the respondents may have read my letter in the "prisoner" style: they may have thought that I am a prisoner of the power of the central administration.

The analysis process was done according to five steps: The research data was collected by a qualitative email interview sent to a sample of 60 members of the personnel, a sample chosen by using the critical incident strategy (Patton 1990). I received 39 answers. The chosen members represented all of the personnel. The data analysis had five steps:

1. In the first step argument analysis was used. The data was studied by searching for

the arguments, what lies behind them and what the bases for the arguments are.

2. The second step was rhetoric analysis: psychological and linguistic approaches were taken along. The arguments were completed as narrative stories.

3. Then, the researcher herself wrote down her thoughts on the stories: how convincing the stories were; to whom they were written; what kinds of means were used in trying to be convincing; how successful these means were in reaching the intended audience; what was the writers's own position; and what else did the stories make the reader think.

4. After that, eight other people were asked to member-check the analysis - the stories by using the terms of rhetoric analysis.

5. The researcher coded the data at the same time by using the NVivo qualitative analysis program. The logos, ethos and pathos were searched from the data in the NVivo coding.

All the time during the analysis process I tried to act as an **outsider** and study the data as it was, not mixing my feelings with it. I tried to be very phenomenological. The roles, according to Tranquist (2005), were like the tourist and the spy. The tourist role carries with it the respect of the foreign country which here is the data that the researcher tries to understand and get to know. While writing the stories the role of the spy was present: the researcher-spy had tried to find what the answers have in common and take the clues and combine them with one another.

In the beginning of the process all new things were very fascinating and formulated my identity a lot. The identity forming process was of a very social origin: I wanted **to get into the community** of the researchers. The first seminar was a good starting point for that because, as a tourist, I took the chance to step to a foreign country as soon as it was offered to me. It carried along a lot of risk-taking and trying to speak the official language but, anyway, it also gave me such possibilities that formed my identity for a long time. Also **meeting the original inhabitants**, meaning the more experienced researchers gave me possibilities to form my identity and check the way I wanted

it to be formed. In the identity process this meant again the wish to be taken **seriously as a member** of the scientific community. In this phase some **realistic** points came alongside my enthusiasm: the researchers were still human beings and also some negative voices could be heard. Anyway, I continued to form my identity in a social identity way: I listened to others, studied a lot and had a very much personal identity project going on. There were also some Mead points of views because I wanted to become a researcher, whatever it meant: the concept of being a researcher had formed in my mind by the significant others who were more or less **imaginary persons**.

The spy role formed my identity as well: I was working in the central unit and somehow I hoped that doing this research **would help me** in getting a permanent job: this theme is very important for the managers and leaders in all kinds of organizations. This way the spy role made me live according to the expected hopes of the leaders.

The role of missionary was present in writing the report. I as a researcher wanted to write in a way that could **convince the readers**. I got a lot of feedback about that: I was told that I am trying to be very convincing although my arguments are not scientifically valid. I tried to convince my readers and also my listeners in seminars. That was a surprise for me. I was very surprised of these comments by my instructor: I was said to be a **proclaimer** in writing and in speaking. Anyway, in those times I **made friends** with the other students and the collegial support was very remarkable.

In writing the report I was really like a missionary and that had an impact on my identity process, too. There were neither time nor place where I did not want to tell people about my research. It really made me wonder that noone inside the organization was interested: in the previous phase I had a strong belief that **this is important** and could help all the employees to feel better in the job

and to let all know about the results could also help the leaders to be better in their work. Maybe I was too **enthusiastic** about my study and the fact that I was too **noisy** irritated the others. This might be the reason for people not taking me seriously inside the polytechnic. But this missionary identity process still helped me to get some presentations in seminars and thus this individual **identity fulfilment** served the social identity process as a whole.

Comments on the report from an outside evaluator really gave me a "kick-off" to grow as a researcher. I had tried to read the answers as they were and tried to find their core meanings. I thought that I could find the truth as it appears to these respondents. When using the phenomenological way of thinking it is important that the researcher clears his / her pre-thoughts. It is important to get right in to the subject, have no pre-thoughts and be open to findings. (see e.g. Järvinen and Järvinen 2000, 206-207; Varto 1996, 85-89).

In trying to **be convincing** in researching my own colleagues I decided to use the word "researcher" in my report when describing what I had done. I tried to be **objective** to my data also in this rhetoric way. I was very much a prisoner for what I had studied about objectivity and tried to act as is suitable for that role. It was very important for me that my own feelings or thoughts cannot be read in my report, remembering the feedback of my instructor. Using the word "researcher" for all what I had done made me feel to be on a safer ground and made me feel that the results are done not by me but by the respondents.

This all has to do with my search for the truth. But it also includes some theoretical thoughts. To write using the word "researcher" while writing about myself has also to do with my theoretical framework, George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionism. In this theory the Self develops through the interaction between "I" and "Me". "I" is the active part of the Self, and it acts in the present time. "Me" is the part of the Self that we can evaluate and criticize. (Mead 1962, 173-174; Kuusela 2001, 69). If I had written my report using the word "I" it would

## Tapani

need a lot of explaining if I meant to be "I", "Me" or maybe the "Self".

It was interesting to see how I really was a **prisoner of my thoughts** and beliefs. It was great that an **outsider person** read my study and seriously commented on it. It had a positive effect also on the identity process: it really gave me **self-respect** and vision of someday being a member of the community of the researchers. Although I was a prisoner of my theory and my philosophical points of view I had this kind of an imaginary community to which I now had a loose connection.

doing the research. I got feedback from my report and had a long discussion on the "researcher" – "I" theme. Afterwards I noticed that it also has to do with self-consciousness. Earlier, when I was unsure about my research it was easier to write in a way that seemed to be objective. I thought that objectiveness seemed to increase credibility. While the process went on I became more ready to take responsibility for what I had done and why. Then it became possible for me to be I. The research steps with the roles and identity process are summed up in Table 3.

Anyway, this was the main stage where I had to start to think about **who I really was** in

**Table 3.** . The steps in the research process, their contents and the researcher's role

The steps in the research process	Including	The researcher's role	The identity process
First seminar	First presentation	Tourist: speaking with the strangers and using a new language in a new context	Need for getting in ingroup: Social identity process
Getting started and taking part in seminars	Reading, getting advice, reading more, presentations, listening to others presenting, communicating with others	Tourist: different themes, many kinds of discussions, the instructor in a leading role	Need for getting in ingroup: Social identity process
Data gathering	Data gathering in the polytechnic	Spy: spying what my colleagues really think	My personal interest in the data and getting a permanent job: Individualistic identity process
Data analysis	Argument and rhetoric analysis, member-check analysis, NVivo coding	Spy: interest in what the data is about, what they are speaking about – spying for the polytechnic	First my analysis as a spy: thinking that this will interest the managers in the polytechnic, after that the need for being accepted as a member in scientific comm.-

		(maybe?)  Tourist: informing the results in the community of the researchers – am I now one of us, or still a tourist?	unity: From individualistic to social identity process
Writing a report	Trying to make all parts to fit together in a congruent way	Missionary: need for proclaiming what the staff really thinks	I wanted to declare my results and get a membership, or a job: Individualistic process inside the social identity forming process
Feedback	Comments on my report from the evaluator	Prisoner: the search for the truth still goes on - feeling of depression if the truth of the “we-ness” cannot be found	I was keen on getting the study completed and getting the membership among the researchers (imaginary community): Social identity process
Post Scriptum: writing this article	My own evaluation of the research process	Spy: now spying the work done by myself  Tourist: interest for new countries still goes on – possibilities to new presentations etc.	Interest for meta-evaluation of the process and interest in the membership in a community of researchers, need for taking part in seminars etc.: Social identity process

## Tapani

phases. In one step there was a process proceeding from individually based identity project towards the socially based identity.

In Table 4 I connect the roles with their effect on the identity forming process.

As a result, in these seven phases of the research process I had the tourist role four times, spy role three times, and missionary and prisoner roles both once. The socially based identity process was present in four phases and the individualistic process in two

**Table 4.** The roles and their theoretical and empirical impact on identity forming process

<b>Roles</b>	Tourist	Spy	Missionary	Prisoner
<b>Theoretical connection to the identity forming process</b>	Social origin: Harre's identity theory, also some elements of Mead's theory	Individualistic: has to do with the ingroup - outgroup – setting (e.g. Helkama et al.)	Individualistic inside the social: By the project the person constructs his / her privacy and uniqueness inside the social identity (Harré).	Social identity: e.g. the Generalised Other (Mead)
<b>Empirical setting</b>	Need for getting in ingroup	Personal interest but also a will to serve the leaders	Declarative but also a need for a membership	Need for a membership in an imaginary community

community does not easily allow for taking the role of the tourist because the language

### **Conclusion: The Roles in Forming the Identity**

The results show that the roles have a remarkable effect on the identity forming process. But it can also be seen that there is a need for the identity forming process: as a novice researcher, or novice in any area, all seems so interesting and sometimes very hard to understand. So the roles are also driven from the situation and the person's need and will to develop and take new challenges.

The empirical data confirm the theoretical framework well. The restriction of this study is the lack of possibilities for the researcher to take some other roles in some phases of the research process: to be part of the

and terms used are familiar from the everyday life. The results of the roles and their effect on the identity growth might have been different if the researcher were an outsider in the working community. The need for the identity growth also depends on the person's own need to develop his / her identity. Anyway, it is significant that identity growth is not controlled by the individual or the social community alone but both sides are needed. A person needs to decide whether he / she wants to develop the identity and, after that, reflection is also needed. It is important to reflect in an authentic and honest way on what have been the elements that have caused the changes in the identity forming process. It is also important to pay

attention to the social communities that are not present but are still forming us to be what we are.

What did I then learn from this process? In the beginning of the process I thought that I am a realist: as I confessed, I was searching for the truth. During the process I learned to understand the critical interest of knowledge (see e.g. Kyrö 2004, 63). At this point I confess to be a neorealist: according to that we believe that there can be a reality somewhere outside the human consciousness but reality can also be something else than that. It can be constructed in human minds or it can be social. When thinking this way, constructivism is not the opposite of realism. Constructivism and realism can be combined in different ways in individual thinking. In some cases, a constructivist can be a realist and vice versa. This can be called realistic constructivism or neorealism. (Tynjälä, Heikkinen and Huttunen 2005, 21, 23.)

I thought that I am hooked on phenomenology in a too one-eyed way. I had a feeling that I am too close to my research interest and I tried to do all I could to outsource myself. By studying the roles I took during the research process my eyes opened to metaconceptual awareness (Tynjälä, Heikkinen and Huttunen 2005, 25). Although it is said that the researcher's work is a lonely work other persons are also needed, in Mead's terms significant others.

One question in social sciences has been the relation between the individual and the social. According to Burr (2004, 13, 18), a human being is a morally oriented free thinker who has his unique thoughts, beliefs and values. An individual is defined through his internal psychological state and is apart from the material reality and from the other individuals. In psychology a human being is described as an individual whose nature is not dependent on the social environment around. Lukes (1973) writes that there exists an abstract human being and every human being has her

own special characteristics that are there in spite of the society she lives in.

To become the owner of the research process has to do with the criticism of Mead's theory. The criticism is related to its behaviorism: does a person change his / her behaviour according to outside stimulus and react against it? In my professional growth story it went like that as long as I tried to make my research according to only my instructor's information and advice. Anyway, that part of the learning process was like reacting against stimuli but I was not in charge of my process then. The learning happened according to social behaviorism. It is important to listen to others in the group but also every single member has an impact on the others in the group. The members are not only reflecting the stimuli they get from others but also changing their behaviour according to the stimuli. The behaviour they reflect back is always individually changed. It is not enough to just react but in order to learn and change it is also important to recognize the situation, the significant others and modify one's behaviour to be suitable for them.

In my learning process the outside stimuli have played a big role but they have needed internal interpretation: it has been important to see oneself through the others' eyes, using the significant other as the Generalized Other. It has not been an easy way and the process is still going on. It has been an empowering experience to get feedback and advice but still have the feeling that the final decisions are made by me.

According to Mead (1962, 162), the Self can be a whole self only if one is part of some group, reflecting his/her thoughts and acting in a context, getting feedback. A human being is said to be totally social and to grow as a whole "Self" is only possible through social processes (Kuusela 2001, 68). First, the human beings have to manifest themselves and be aware of each other (Ahlman 1967, 159). To be a whole Self one's Self has to manifest itself and the others and after that one has to be a part of some group. Through manifesting, confessing what has been done and reflecting the process

## Tapani

also the researcher can become I, the owner of the process and her life.

### REFERENCES

- Aarnio, Aulis 1999. Identiteettiä etsimässä. Pirkanmaan kulttuuriselvitys. Pirkanmaan liitto, sarja B, julkaisu nro 51.
- Ahlman, Erik 1967. Arvojen ja välineiden maailma. Eettis-idealistinen maailmantarkasteluko. Uusintapainos, alkuperäisteos vuodelta 1920. Porvoo: WSOY.
- Alasuutari, Pertti 1994. Laadullinen tutkimus. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Ammattikorkeakoululaki 351/2003: <http://finlex1.edita.fi>.- The law on universities of applied sciences 351/2003: <http://finlex1.edita.fi>.
- Bandura, Albert 1997. Self-efficacy: The exercise of control, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Blumer, Herbert 1969. Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and Method. Berkley: University of California Press. Berkley and Los Angeles, California.
- Brown, Rupert 2000. Social Identity Theory: past achievements, current problems and future challenges. European Journal of Social Psychology 30, 743-775. Printed 22.3.2006.
- Burr, Vivien 2004. Sosiaalipsykologisia ihmiskäsityksiä. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Castells, Manuel 2000. The power of identity, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Eriksson, Ingalill 1982. Aktionforskaren som turist, spion, missionary eller fänge på social träning. In Sociologisk Forskning 2/3: 56-60.
- Eskola, Antti 1984. Uhka, toivo ja vastarinta, Kirjayhtymä, Helsinki.
- Gorner, Paul 2001. Reid, Husserl and Phenomenology. British Journal for the History of Philosophy 3, 9. Printed 28.3.2003.
- Hall, Stuart 1999. Identiteetti. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Helkama, Klaus; Myllyniemi, Rauni; Liebkind, Karmela 1998. Johdatus sosiaalipsykologiaan. Helsinki: Edita.
- Juuti, Pauli 1998. Tiimi-käsitteen syövereitä. Aikuiskasvatus 2, (18), 83.
- Järvinen, Pertti ja Järvinen, Annikki 2000. Tutkimustyön metodeista. Tampere: Opin pajan kirja.
- Kalli, Pekka 2005. Johdanto. In Pekka Kalli ja Anita Malinen (Eds.) Konstruktivismi ja realismi. Aikuiskasvatuksen 45. vuosikirja. Vantaa: Kansanvalistusseura ja Aikuiskasvatuksen Tutkimusseura, 9-19.
- Kaunismaa, Pekka 1997. Keitä me olemme? Kollektiivisen identiteetin käsitteellisistä lähtökohdista. Sosiologia 34, (3), 220-229.
- Kuusela, Pekka 2001. George Herbert Mead. Pragmatismi ja sosiaalipsykologia. In Vilma Hänninen, Jukka Partanen & Oili-Helena Ylijoki (Eds.) Sosiaalipsykologian suunnannäyttäjiä. Tampere: Osuuskunta Vastapaino, 61-78.
- van Knippenberg, Daan; van Knippenberg, Barbara; Monden, Laura; de Lima, Fleur

2002. Organizational Identification after a Merger: A Social Identity Perspective. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 41, Issue 2. Printed 22.3.2006.
- Kyrö, Paula 2005. Entrepreneurial paradigm challenges previous learning paradigms. In Paula Kyrö and Camille Carrier (Eds.) *The dynamics of learning entrepreneurship in a cross-cultural university context*. Entrepreneurship Education Series 2/2005. Hämeenlinna: University of Tampere, Research Centre for Vocational and Professional Education.
- Kyrö, Paula 2004. Tutkimusprosessi valintojen polkuna. Yrittäjyyskasvatuksen julkaisusarja. Tampereen yliopisto, Ammattikasvatuksen tutkimus- ja koulutuskeskus.
- Laine, Timo 2001. Miten kokemusta voidaan tutkia? Fenomenologinen näkökulma, In Juhani Aaltola & RaineValli (Eds.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin II. Näkökulmia alouttavalle tutkijalle tutkimuksen teoreettisiin lähtökohtiin ja analyysimenetelmiin*. Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.
- Liljander, Juha-Pekka 2002a. AMK-uudistus-Kymmenessä vuodessa korkeakouluksi. Teoksessa Juha-Pekka Liljander (toim.) *Omalla tiellä. Ammattikorkeakoulut kymmenen vuotta*. Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.
- Liljander, Juha-Pekka 2002b. "Älkää vilkuilko sivuillenne" –tavoitteena omaleimainen korkeakoulu. Olli-Pekka Heinosen haastattelu. In Juha-Pekka Liljander (Ed.) *Omalla tiellä. Ammattikorkeakoulut kymmenen vuotta*. Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.
- Lukes, Steven 1973. *Individualism*: UK: Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Miles, Matthew B. & Huberman, A. Michael 1994. *Qualitative data analysis*. California: Sage.
- Mead, George Herbert 1962. *Mind, Self, & Society. From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Edited and with an Introduction by Charles W. Morris. Chicago: The University on Chicago Press.
- Patton, Michael Quinn 1990. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc. Second Edition.
- Peräkylä, Anssi 2005. Erving Goffman. Sosiaalisen vuorovaikutuksen rakenteet. In Vilma Hänninen, Jukka Partanen & Olli-Helena Ylijoki (Eds.) *Sosiaalipsykologian suunnannäyttäjät*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Priest, Helena 2002. An approach to the phenomenological analysis of data. *Nurse Researcher* 10, 2. Printed 28.3.2003.
- Puolimatka, Tapio 2002. Kvalitatiivisen tutkimuksen luotettavuus ja totuusteorioiden Kasvatus 33, (5), 466-474.
- Rask, Maija 2002. Ammattikorkeakoululaitoksen vakiintuminen ja uudet haasteet. In Juha-Pekka Liljander (Ed.) *Omalla tiellä. Ammattikorkeakoulut kymmenen vuotta*. Helsinki: Edita Prima Oy.
- Rummens, Joanna Anneke 2003. Conceptualising Identity and Diversity: Overlaps, Intersections and Processes. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 3, p. 10-25. Printed 25.3.2006.
- Ruohotie, Pekka 2001. Empowerment – muutoksen ja kasvun edellytys. Ammattikasvatuksen aikakauskirja 1, (3), 4-9.



## Tapani

- Satakunta Polytechnic Internet pages.  
www.samk.fi
- Dilemmas in Interactive Research. Paper presented in NFF Academy of Management Meeting Århus, August 2005.
- Tapani, Annukka 2007. Miten meistä tulee me? Monialaisen ammattikorkeakoulun kollektiivisen identiteetin rakentuminen. The University of Helsinki. Social Sciences, Licentiate Thesis. Unpublished manuscript.
- Tynjälä, Päivi, Heikkinen, Hannu L.T. ja Huttunen, Rauno 2005. Konstruktivistinen oppimiskäsitys oppimisen ohjaamisen perustana. In Pekka Kalli ja Anita Malinen (Eds.) Konstruktivismi ja realismi. Aikuiskasvatuksen 45. vuosikirja. Vantaa: Kansanvalistusseura ja Aikuiskasvatuksen Tutkimusseura, 20-48.
- Tiller, T. 2004. Forpliktende forskningfantasi. In Tiller, T. (Ed.) Aksjonsforskning. Kristiansand: Höyskoleforlaget.
- Varto, Juha 1996. Laadullisen tutkimuksen metodologia. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä.
- Tuomi, Jouni & Sarajärvi, Anneli 2002. Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi, Helsinki.
- Ylijoki, Oili-Helena 2001. Rom Harrè. Toimijuus, kieli ja moraalit. In Vilma Hänninen, Jukka Partanen & Oili-Helena Ylijoki (Eds.) Sosiaalipsykologian suunnannäyttäjiä. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Tranquist, Joakim 2005. Metaphorical

Copyright of TAMARA: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science is the property of TAMARA: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.