Identity and Collaborative Strategy in the Case of Canadian HIV/AIDS Treatment*

by

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Abstract

We explore the links between identity and strategy making by drawing upon a case study of a collaborative strategy implemented by community organizations and pharmaceutical companies involved in Canadian HIV/AIDS treatment. In implementing collaborative strategy, our analysis shows that champions engage in identity work that simultaneously involves: (a) identification with their respective constituencies and, specifically, with categories associated with high legitimacy; (b) counter-identification from their respective constituencies by constructing themselves as different from its core members; (c) dis-identification away from their constituency towards their collaborative partners. We also examine the interactions between champions and other actors involved in the strategic change process to show the limits and tensions involved in such identity work. We conclude with a discussion of the implications for research and practice.

Introduction

This article examines the role that identity plays in collaborative strategy. We know that strategy is influenced by organizational identity – individuals’ beliefs around organizational identity and image influence how strategic issues are interpreted and acted upon – but there is surprisingly little work on how individual identity is connected to strategy making. As a result, the strategy literature has been slow to incorporate some of the more recent thinking on identity found in the organizational literature, particularly the work that has adopted postmodern ideas. This literature theorizes identity as a socially constructed phenomenon, rather than a fixed constellation of essentialist characteristics (e.g., Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Because different identities may be associated with greater or lesser power, actors engage in “identity work” i.e., activities undertaken “individually or collectively, to give meaning to themselves or others” (Schwalbe & Mason-Shrock, 1996: 115) in ways that allow them to influence strategic outcomes.

We draw upon a case study of collaborative strategy implemented by pharmaceutical companies and community organizations involved in HIV/AIDS treatment in Canada. Collaborative strategy is a useful arena in which to explore identity because interactions among individuals from very different backgrounds, organizations, and sectors render identity issues highly visible. In addition, collaboration, both within and across sectors, is an important strategy for dealing with a wide variety of social and competitive challenges. Exploring identity is, therefore, a useful way to understand the basis of successful collaboration, and also to draw conclusions regarding the role of identity in strategic change more generally. This study makes a number of contributions: it shows how champions can help to implement collaborative strategy through their identity work; it provides an understanding of the way in which these champions interact with other actors; it identifies some of the limits and tensions that actors face in carrying

out identity work; and, by combining the strategy literature with work on identity, it responds to calls for studies that focus on processes of strategic change.

The paper is structured as follows. We begin by reviewing the literature on collaborative strategy and exploring how identity has been discussed in relation to strategy. This allows us to formulate the two research questions that guided our analysis. Second, we discuss the method and the case study. Third, we present our findings. We conclude with a discussion of the implications.

Collaborative Strategy and Identity

Collaborative Strategy

Collaborative strategy involves an ongoing cooperative relationship among organizations. Rather than relying on market and hierarchical mechanisms of control, it is negotiated in an ongoing communicative process (Heide, 1994; Phillips, Lawrence & Hardy, 2000). It takes a variety of forms, including consortia, alliances, roundtables, networks and associations, but is distinguished from cooperation that is purchased, as in the case of a firm's relationships with its suppliers, as well as cooperation based on authority, as in the case of an organization operating under the jurisdiction of a regulatory agency (Lawrence, Phillips & Hardy, 1999; 2002).

Collaborative strategy is an important tool for organizations as they struggle with both business and social issues (Hardy, Phillips & Lawrence, 2003). In the business sector, a variety of forms of inter-firm relationships are regularly used to increase competitiveness (e.g., Gulati, Nohria & Zaheer, 2000). In the not-for-profit sector, collaborative strategy is an important way for organizations to pool resources and to develop expertise (e.g., Lawrence, Hardy & Phillips, 2002). Cross-sector collaboration brings together government, business, community and civil society organizations for a wide variety of strategic purposes (e.g., Gray, 1989;). Collaborative strategy helps organizations to acquire resources and skills (Afuah, 2000); to engage in learning and innovation (Kale, Singh & Perlmutter, 2000); to create new knowledge (Powell, Koput &

Smith-Doerr, 1996); and to benefit from network centrality (Gulati, 1998) and power (Hardy & Phillips, 1998).

Collaborative strategy represents an important strategic challenge that merits special attention if we are to manage it successfully, especially given that many collaborative strategies fail to deliver on their promised benefits (Huxham, 1996; Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Failure often arises from the difficulties in balancing the needs of the collaborative project with those of the participating organizations: the collective good does not always serve the immediate interests of individual partners. The absence of market or hierarchical forms of control means that cooperation has to be negotiated on an ongoing basis by individuals who are not only members of the collaboration, but who also identify with their respective organizations (Hardy, Lawrence & Grant, 2005). Thus collaborative strategy represents an arena where identity and identity conflicts feature strongly – any analysis of collaboration should, therefore, also include a consideration of identity.

Identity and Strategy

While identity has preoccupied researchers in fields as diverse as social identity theory, gender studies, and critical management studies (see Nkomo & Cox [1996]; Calás & Smircich [1996]; Ainsworth & Hardy [2004] for overviews), it has not attracted nearly so much attention in the strategy literature. In this section, we explore the literature on individual identity, identification processes and organizational identity as they relate to strategy.

Some work has been conducted on how individual characteristics of the top management team lead to particular decisions or relate to organizational performance. For example, different demographic characteristics influence such factors as post-acquisition performance (Krishnan, Miller & Judge, 1997), performance (Carpenter, 2002), strategic consensus (Knight, Pearce, Smith & Olian, 1999), global strategic posture (Carpenter & Frederickson, 2001), growth

(Boeker, 1997), and innovation (Schoenecker, Daellenbach & McCarthy, 1995). This work adopts a rather deterministic approach and does not take into account how aspects of identities might be presented in different ways or how they change over time.

Another indirect examination of identity is found in the work on strategy making styles (e.g., Brodwin and Bourgeois, 1994; Mehta, Dubinsky & Anderson, 2003). So, for example, a command or designing style is associated with a senior manager who champions change (Ginsberg & Abrahamson, 1991) while an animating or generative style allows for actors elsewhere in the organization to influence strategy making, (Mintzberg, 1978), perhaps as “good soldiers” who execute plans formulated by top managers (Guth & MacMillan, 1986), or as “entrepreneurs” who behave autonomously in the pursuit of new initiatives (Burgelman, 1983). Such work does not, however, take into account the meaning that a particular style has for actors within a specific set of historical and contextual circumstances.

The work on identification processes in organizations explores the extent to which members perceive themselves as belonging to an organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). To varying degrees, individuals derive part of their identity from the organizations to which they belong (Dutton et al., 1994). A member’s self-concept is thus tied to his or her organizational membership (Fiol 2002),. In identifying with the organization, members not only create a sense of self, they also construct the organization’s identity: in defining whether and how they fit into an organization, members develop particular perceptions of what they believe the organization to be. To the extent that members share beliefs about what is central, distinctive and enduring about their organization, an organizational identity is said to exist (Albert & Whetten, 1985).

Organizational identity and identification have strategic implications insofar as they affect the way in which members interpret and act on issues (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Members’ perceptions of their organization’s and the extent to which they identify with it influences the

importance that they attach to an issue, whether or not they see it as a threat or opportunity, and how willing they are to invest time and energy in it, which in turn produces particular strategic outcomes. Studies have accordingly explored the link between identification, organizational identity and a range of strategic outcomes, including competitive advantage (Fiol, 2001); learning (Brown & Starkey, 2000); commitment (Dutton et al., 1994); the ability to cope with high velocity environments (Gustafson & Reger, 1995); sensemaking (Gioia & Thomas, 1996); entrepreneurialism (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001), and the introduction of public sector reforms (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000).

This work is heavily influenced by Albert & Whetten (1985) who define organizational identity in terms of convergence in members' beliefs about central, enduring and distinctive characteristics of the organization (Ravasi & Van Rekom 2003). More recently, however, researchers have become more aware of multiple organizational and individual identities, which may complement or contradict each other.

Psychologists and sociologists, for example, have long argued for the existence of multiple identities within the same individual ... Organizations also have been conceptualized as having many “selves” ... Common to these treatments of identity is the assumption that multiple identities can conflict with one another and, therefore, must be “managed” (Pratt & Foreman, 2000: 18).

To incorporate this complexity, the literature has expanded its focus to include instability in identity (Gioia, Shultz & Corley, 2000); multiple and hybrid identities (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; Foreman & Whetten, 2002); identity conflict (Glynn, 2000); the dysfunctional aspects of a strong identity (Fiol, 2002;); and the role of external stakeholders in constructing identity (Scott & Lane, 2000; Bartel, 2001).

This literature is, then, increasingly interested in the fragility, multiplicity, complexity and processual nature of identity. However, it is hampered by a definition based on durability, convergence and unity. In addition, while acknowledging there is a link between organizational and individual identity, few studies link individual-level identity dynamics to the broader dynamics of organizational-level settings; and many exclude discussion of individual identity altogether (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). We argue that one way to overcome these difficulties is to examine identity from a postmodern perspective because it offers “interesting possibilities for explaining how identities may be managed” (Pratt & Forman, 2000: 37), making it easier to design and conduct processual and multi-level research, as advocated by Pettigrew et al.(2001).

It is not possible to categorize a single or unified postmodern approach to identity since it spans a variety of research disciplines (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004). In general, research rejects the idea of a stable, unitary essential identity in favour of a more fluid, fragile conceptualization (Clegg & Hardy, 1996), as a result of the influence particularly of Foucault (e.g., 1982), but also Fairclough (1992); Gergen (1991) and Hacking (1986)., This orientation recognizes that the various categorizations that constitute identity and their meanings are not fixed but change over time, in different contexts, and as a result of ongoing language use: actors can shape identity but only within the context of the available cultural repertoire of linguistic resources. By situating identity in the language in use among actors, this approach shifts attention from the intentions and attitudes of individuals to observable linguistic practices, and their effects on social relationships and action (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Accordingly, it is well suited to explore interactions between organizational and individual identity (Phillips & Hardy, 1997); contradictions within identity construction processes (Holmer Nadesan, 1996); and the influence of context in identity construction (e.g., Covaleski et al. 1998).

Research Questions

Our first research question concerns what the actors who champion new strategies – in this case, a collaborative strategy – actually do. We are interested in the situated and processual aspects of identity in contrast to “the ubiquitous single-snapshot technique” to which most contemporary organizational researchers restrict themselves (Avital, 2000: 66). This approach is embedded in “the deep structure of modernist social science” that dominates the field of strategy (Pettigrew et al., 2001: 699). To understand how organizing processes are always in the act of “becoming” (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), we need to draw on other literatures. The idea of identity work is useful because, rather than viewing identity as a set of “innate characteristics which define the essence of the individual” (Litvin, 1997: 201), it is understood as a loosely connected set of narratives that are constructed, maintained and challenged on an ongoing basis in a particular context (Gergen, 1991; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1996). Thus the concepts of identity and identity work lend themselves to a processual orientation and draw on postmodern conceptualizations (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2001), as opposed to modernist thinking. By studying the identity work of champions, we can understand what these processes involve and how they helped to bring about a new collaborative strategy. As Weick (1999) has noted, we need to understand change as a continuous process, where work practices and ways of relating are continually and constantly modified (Orlikowski 1996), and which is situated and embedded, (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Thus, we pose our first research question: ***What is the identity work undertaken by champions of collaborative strategy?***

We cannot simply focus on champions, but must also consider other actors. Identity work involves *multiple* parties engaging in “a continuous process of narration where both the narrator and audience formulate, edit, applaud and refuse various elements of the constantly-produced narrative” (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1996: 160). Thus identity emerges “from specific historical

circumstances and struggles” (Gatter, 1995: 1523) as actors engage in the construction and reconstruction of their own identities and those of others (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) in order to achieve their objectives (Phillips & Hardy, 1997). Thus we must consider the interplay of identity work among actors and how various attributes of identity are negotiated, achieved and stabilized in these struggles. Any “informed analysis of identity construction in an organizational setting has to acknowledge the socially and discursively constructed nature of the self” and “to take an interest in its particular modes of production” (Kärreman & Alvesson, 2001: 63). This brings us to our second research question: *How does the identity work of champions interact with that of other actors?*

Methods

Our study focuses on a collaborative strategy implemented by pharmaceutical companies and community organizations involved in HIV/AIDS treatment in Canada, which resulted in the formation of the Canadian Treatment Advocates Council (CTAC). In this section, we explain our research design, data collection and analysis, and present the case.

Research Design

Marshall & Rossman (1995) suggest that qualitative studies are most appropriate for studying poorly understood phenomena, and when the contextual and dynamic “structuring of the organizational member’s socially constructed world” and “the worldviews of the people under study” are important (Lee: 1999: 43). The role of identity in strategy making is not well understood and, because we also wished to engage in theory building, the detailed, qualitative investigation of a single case study was appropriate Yin, 2003).

We selected this case study because the theoretical issues (i.e., identity) were transparent and visible for a number of reasons (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). First, this collaboration involved individuals from very different organizations, with very different backgrounds and

views. Second, the distinctions between self and other were particularly evident because the collaboration bridged industry and community groups that had previously been in conflict with each other. Third, this was a multilateral collaboration involving multiple companies and community organizations. Thus there were multiple “others”. Finally, HIV/AIDS is an arena in which “identity politics” are centre-stage, and previous research had already indicated that identity was important (Maguire et al., 2001; Maguire, Hardy & Lawrence, 2004).

Data Collection

We collected qualitative data from a range of sources, including interviews and observation of meetings. Data collection commenced in 1996 when one of the authors participated in a meeting of industry and community members, following which interviewing commenced. Initial interviews focused on actors directly involved in the collaborative strategy, as well as other stakeholders, less directly involved but still affected by the changes. Interviewees were identified by other interviewees and by names appearing in documentary data. The main phase of interviewing continued until 1997, when CTAC was established, with two follow-up interviews in 2000. Interviews were, as a result, both real time and retrospective. They related to the nature of the collaboration that led to the formation of CTAC, rather than to identity per se, which emerged from the analysis of the data (see below). Interviews were unstructured and open-ended: interviewees were asked to recount the development of the collaboration that had led to CTAC, describe their actions and views, and identify other actors and their actions. A total of 29 semi-structured interviews were conducted in French or English according to interviewee preference, taped and transcribed. Quotations are taken from the transcripts, although certain details are disguised to maintain confidentiality.

During 1996 and 1997, we attended a number of meetings connected with setting up CTAC, We noted the issues that arose and the ways in which different actors responded to the

issues and to each other. We collected a wide range of documentation, including agendas and minutes from meetings; copies of presentations about the collaborative strategy; private notes and correspondence; newsletters, brochures and press releases; and annual reports of the Canadian Treatment Advocates Council (CTAC). Finally, we consulted a wide range of historical accounts of AIDS and HIV/AIDS treatment activism in North America (e.g., Arno & Feiden, 1992; Crimp, 1988; Edgar and Rothman, 1990; Epstein, 1996; Gilmore, 1991; Grmek, 1990; Harrington, 1997; Maguire, 2002; Roy, 1995; Shilts, 1987; Treichler, 1999; Wachter, 1991; 1992).

Our analysis comes primarily from these interviews, in which people talked about their own and others' identities. Identities are constructed in the stories people tell about themselves and others (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998). Self-identity is constituted as actors attempt to construct a coherent, continuous biography where their story is the sensible result of a series of related events or cohesive themes (Gergen, 1994), which presents the self as rational, consistent and unified (Bourdieu, 2000). Moreover, in telling such narratives, an actor not only constructs a particular version of their own identities but also those of others (Davis & Harré, 1990). Documentary data was important for triangulation and to support assertions made by interviewees, especially with regard to individuals' claims of having been active or not in the strategy. It also provided information on the context in which the identity work was occurring.

Data Analysis

In the first stage of analysis, we developed a narrative account (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988) that chronicled the emergence and implementation of the collaborative strategy that culminated in CTAC and drew on previous analyses (Maguire et al., 2001; Maguire et al., 2004) to establish the context in which identity work was occurring.

Second, we systematically analyzed all interview transcripts and documentary data for evidence of actors who explicitly advocated for or against the collaborative strategy. In some

cases, interviewees self-identified as supporting or opposing the strategy, while others were named by other interviewees or in documents such as minutes of meetings. We identified 15 community members and 10 industry members who indicated either clear support for, or clear resistance to, the strategy. (Because views changed, we also noted whether actors became more or less supportive of the collaborative strategy as it progressed.) We then examined the extent to which individuals were active in their support or opposition, tracing patterns of inclusion in, or exclusion from, a series of activities that contributed to the emergence and implementation of the collaborative strategy. For community members, these activities included: (a) participation on the community-based precursor to CTAC; (b) participation on the industry-based precursor to CTAC; (c) attendance at key meetings at which the collaborative strategy was debated and designed; (d) lobbying informally for or against the collaborative strategy with community or industry members, outside of formal meetings; (e) participation on one or both of CTAC's interim and initial board; and (f) maintaining ongoing, formal involvement with the collaborative strategy. For industry members, the key activities were: (a) direct involvement with the industry-based precursor to CTAC; (b) attendance at key meetings at which the collaborative strategy was debated and designed; (c) lobbying informally for or against the collaborative strategy with community or industry members; (d) hiring staff to fill community liaison positions; (e) authorizing significant community liaison activities associated with the collaborative strategy; (f) engaging in significant community liaison activities; and (g) funding CTAC initially or on an ongoing basis.

From this analysis, we identified four individuals from the community (C1, C2, C3 and C4 in Table 1) and four individuals from industry (I1, I2, I3, I4) who (1) clearly supported the collaborative strategy and (2) engaged in the key activities that helped to bring it about. We refer to these individuals as “champions”. Champions from the community were treatment advocates

(i.e. community lay-experts on treatment issues), while those from industry were HIV liaison managers from companies deemed progressive by the community, as indicated in Table 1.

— Table 1 near here —

Third, we analyzed the identity work of these champions by examining statements about self and comparisons with other (e.g., Riggins, 1997): identity construction is a “process of differentiation, a description of one’s own group and simultaneously a separation from the ‘others’” (Wodak, 1996: 126). The other is different to self and, usually, less desirable, acceptable, and legitimate (see Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004); power relations are implicated in these oppositions, such as when, for example, white is positioned against black, man against woman, insider against outsider (Hall, 1997). Because self and other are constructed primarily in talk (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998), we examined the ways in which the champions talked about themselves and others involved in the collaborative strategy. We discerned patterns in the data that showed contradictory processes in the way in which champions located themselves in relation to their own constituency and to the other constituency. We then consulted the identity literature and Holmer Nadesan’s (1996) work in particular for appropriate categories, and found a clear link between the results of our analysis and her concepts of identification, counter-identification and dis-identification. We refined our analysis by using these concepts to systematically categorize champions’ descriptions of self and other, re-coding the data. Thus broad patterns were reduced to more precise categories related to these identity work processes, as discussed in the findings, through an iterative process of comparisons and by extracting patterns (cf., Yin, 2003).

Finally, we broadened the focus to analyze the relationships among the champions and other actors. Specifically, we examined the remaining actors in Table 1 and, applying the same dimensions used to identify the champions (advocating for or against the strategy; and active or inactive in bringing it about), we identified three other categories. First, some actors originally

advocated against the collaborative strategy and were active throughout the process although, rather than blocking it or preventing it outright, they shaped it through their resistance and, by the time that CTAC was finally set up, were cautiously supportive of it. We call this group “skeptics.” It consisted of two senior managers (I7, I8) in progressive pharmaceutical companies, two AIDS activists and one treatment advocate (C10, C11 and C12). Second, we identified actors who advocated for the strategy but who, despite their support, were inactive. We call this group “wannabe champions.” Five paid ASO employees (C5, C6, C7, C8, C9) were supportive of CTAC, but had played no part, other than appearing at some early meetings, despite expressing wishes that they could have played an active part. Similarly, two employees working for traditional companies (I5, I6), while expressing their support for CTAC, were not active in realizing it. Third, three community members (C13, C14, C15) – two free-lancers (i.e. community members involved in treatment issues but without formal organizational affiliations) and one AIDS activist – and two senior managers in traditional firms (I9, I10) advocated against the collaborative strategy but were inactive in trying to block and/or shape it. We call them “naysayers” in that, although they were against the collaborative strategy, they were neither active nor successful in preventing it. We then systematically tracked the interplay of talk about identity by the champions in relation to these other categories. By moving between data and concepts in this way, we were able refine the data into conceptual categories (Eisenhardt, 1989) that pointed to tensions in, and limits to, identity work, which are discussed in more detail below.

A Case Study of Collaborative Strategy

The field of HIV/AIDS treatment is different to most other diseases where pharmaceutical companies and patients are traditionally kept separate by gatekeepers, such as governments who approve drugs and doctors who prescribe them. Patients and pharmaceutical companies rarely interact directly: the former are relatively ignorant and powerless, and gatekeepers are deemed

necessary to protect them. However, when HIV/AIDS emerged in the early 1980s, the medical community did not know how to treat or prevent it. This failure, coupled with the early concentration of cases in the gay community, led to a political response on the part of people living with HIV/AIDS (PHAs). People with AIDS (PWA) organizations, which were coalitions of PHAs, and more radical activist organizations were formed. These organizations had an explicitly political agenda – to lobby on behalf of PHAs and to directly confront pharmaceutical companies, governments and other parts of the medical research establishment that were slow to respond to the crisis. In addition, AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) were set up to provide specific services to PHAs (Epstein, 1996; Harrington, 1997).

Over time, some community members developed considerable expertise regarding highly technical treatment issues by acquiring the necessary medical knowledge and engaging in treatment-oriented projects. They became known as “treatment activists” and were distinguished from “AIDS activists” by virtue of their knowledge and expertise. Some were also willing to work with pharmaceutical companies which, as they began developing new treatments, had become interested in consulting with community organizations on research and marketing. These lay-experts, primarily HIV+ volunteers in activist and PWA organizations, became known as “AIDS treatment advocates”. At the same time, certain companies came to be perceived as more progressive and relationship-oriented, and with the creation of HIV/AIDS liaison positions, some employees earned the reputation of being caring and compassionate.

Following sporadic and informal consultation in the early 1990s, a series of meetings were held in 1995 and 1996 involving community members and pharmaceutical employees to set up a more formalized collaboration – a “community-driven, pharmaceutical-supported” organization that would act as a central site for consultation among pharmaceutical companies and community organizations on treatment issues. Eventually, the Canadian Treatment

Advocates Council (CTAC) was formed, holding its first annual general meeting in early 1997. It brought together 8 pharmaceutical companies and representatives of 19 community organizations, including PWA organizations, ASOs and special interest groups. An eight-member board of community members was established and permanent liaison teams were created to maintain an ongoing relationship with pharmaceutical companies, which provided funding for the collaboration. (For more details on CTAC and the changes that occurred in this domain see Maguire et al., 2001; 2004).

CTAC represented a highly successful collaborative strategy. It involved cooperation among various community members and pharmaceutical companies that was negotiated on an ongoing basis. Participation was voluntary: the pharmaceutical companies were not bound by either a hierarchical arrangement or by market mechanisms, and could withdraw from CTAC at any point; and, while the structure of CTAC gave certain community organizations a formal seat on the board, any single representative or organization could cease their cooperation at any time. Despite the difficulties of sustaining cooperation among partners with very different agendas and interests, participants from both community and industry, including some who had originally opposed it, considered it a very effective collaboration.

Findings

Identity Work by Champions

Our first research question focuses on the identity work by champions of the collaborative strategy. We show how champions exploited categories of identity available in the field, as described in the case study above, in ways that had important consequences for strategy making..

Some categories of identity provided potential resources and opportunities to participate in the collaborative strategy. In general terms, to successfully realize a collaborative strategy, champions have to be associated with two types of identity: those that allow them to speak *to*

their collaborative partners, as well as identities that allow them to speak *for* their constituency (Hardy et al., 2005). In any context, certain identities acquire greater legitimacy in terms of their “rights to speak” (Potter & Wetherell, 1997), in this case, on behalf of others. Those with legitimacy – as perceived by *both* community and industry – were individuals dying from AIDS vs. those living from AIDS; community members who volunteered in activist and/or PWA organizations vs. those who were paid employees of ASOs; employees who worked for progressive companies vs. those who worked for traditional companies; and those who worked in liaison positions vs. those who worked in sales and marketing (Maguire et al., 2001; 2004).

The challenge for champions was to construct themselves in such a way that they could credibly make a claim to privileged identities. To examine how champions engaged in such identity work, we analyzed their accounts (as described above in the data analysis section) for evidence of the following processes. First, *identification* occurs when individuals define themselves in relation to existing designations of identities and accept prevailing evaluations of these designations and the interests associated with them. *Counter-identification* signifies rejection of formal designations of identities that are associated with a lack or inadequacy, and whose interests are recognized as running counter to the individual’s interests and objectives. *Dis-identification* occurs as individuals eschew existing identities by defining themselves in relation to alternative designations of identities and recognizing that the interests associated with these alternatives are consistent with individual interests and objectives (see Holmer-Nadesan, 1996). We found evidence of all three processes, which occurred simultaneously (see Table 2).

— Table 2 near here —

First, industry and community champions identified themselves in relation to their constituencies and, specifically, with the more privileged identities, accepting the prevailing evaluations associated with them. As shown in Table 2, champions defined themselves as

belonging to categories of identity that had high legitimacy in the eyes of both constituencies. For example, community champions constantly reiterated those aspects of themselves associated with these privileged identities i.e., HIV+ volunteers in PWA organizations, rather than healthy or paid employees of ASOs, who were viewed with suspicion by both community and industry members.

You always have to question what people's agendas are in these groups if they're not positive. People who are positive ... it's a life and death type of agenda or to help others or something like that. But [with one seronegative particular person] ... we all sense that [this person] wants to be in government. [This person] wants to work his way into the government this way – through [HIV/AIDS] (employee).

Industry champions also emphasized those aspects of their identities that resonated with both constituencies: holding liaison positions; being employees in consultative companies; and having a history of working with the community. Consultative companies were deemed far more legitimate by members of the community than more “traditional” pharmaceutical companies, which were seen as opportunistic and exploitative. “Progressive” companies were also recognized as “leaders” in HIV/AIDS treatment by other industry members. Employees who worked directly with the community were considered to be more effective organizational representatives, compared to those working in traditional sales and marketing positions, by senior managers, who were attuned to the complexity of market relationships associated with HIV/AIDS treatment, as well as by the community. In sum, by engaging in this identity work, both community and industry champions *identified with their constituency* insofar as they constructed themselves as belonging to categories of identity associated with high legitimacy.

Second, at the same time as champions identified with their own constituency, they also differentiated themselves from its core members, designating them as unable to implement the

collaborative strategy, and recognizing that their interests ran counter to its success. AIDS activists and traditional pharmaceutical managers were unlikely to be able to work together effectively because their legitimacy as representatives was restricted to their own constituency, unlike treatment advocates and progressive partners whose legitimacy was recognized by both constituencies,. Accordingly, in the case of the community, champions talked in terms that differentiated them from core activists by drawing on the nuanced concept of treatment advocate, and signalling the limitations of activism:

Advocacy is more the kind of lobbying, the preparations of briefs, all that kind of stuff ... whereas activism I think is more on the street, in your face, confrontational kind of activity (community member).

In the industry, champions differentiated themselves from traditional pharmaceutical managers.

Some [managers] still felt that if you touched someone with HIV you can get HIV ... plus it is a homosexual disease and you know all of these taboos. [This] is a male company, of course, a boys' club and all of this type of stuff. [For me] it is not a problem, it is to be demystified (company employee).

Both industry and community champions thus *counter-identified from core members of their constituency*, which was necessary if collaboration was to be possible since the core members of the two constituencies were too far apart to be able to collaborate easily.

Third, at the same time as champions both identified and counter-identified with members of their own constituency, they also related their identities to those of their collaborative partners in the “other” constituency, whose interests were consistent with the collaborative strategy. Champions defined themselves as being similar to the “other” and, at the same time, spoke of potential partners as being similar to them. In this regard, champions *dis-identified away from their own constituencies and towards collaborative partners* by defining themselves in relation to

alternative designations of identities in the other constituency, which they saw as being more supportive of the collaborative strategy.

Community members began to define themselves in terms usually reserved for industry members. For example, one champion talked about himself in terms of pharmaceutical products in general, not merely those for treatment of HIV/AIDS:

We're doing something that goes beyond the scope of just AIDS. ... we could be redefining some of the way Canadians, as consumers, deal with governments and with the products that they put into their bodies (community member).

Similarly, industry champions talked about themselves as going beyond traditional business practices to incorporate understandings of self typically associated with the community:

I really feel that in the long run in pharmaceutical companies, we are going away from the traditional conventional marketing ... I wanted to show them [the community] my marketing plan and [my manager] was saying: "Are you sure you want to show them your marketing plan." And I said yes: "I am sure I want to show them ... I want ... transparency [and] openness (employee).

Almost universally, champions constructed their identities in terms of being able to speak the same language as their prospective partners who could help to bring about the new strategy.

These processes, which occurred concurrently over the study, constituted the identity work carried out by champions. They raise a number of issues. First, while champions located themselves within their constituency, they simultaneously distanced themselves from its core and supposedly similar actors, at the same time as locating themselves closer to supposedly different actors in the "other" constituency with whom they sought to collaborate. In other words, champions located themselves on the "periphery" between the industry and the community. By constructing their identities in this way, they could talk *to* their collaborative partners in a way

that traditional identities at the core of each constituency could not; at the same time, they could still speak *for* their constituency. Second, this identity work was situated – it drew on the specific context of HIV/AIDS treatment in Canada as particular dimensions of identity pertaining to health, employment, etc. were emphasized or downplayed.

Third, unlike other work (e.g., Holmer-Nadesan, 1996) that suggests actors either engage in identification *or* counter-identification *or* dis-identification, our findings show that champions engaged in all three processes at the same time. The identity work associated with collaborative strategy is thus complex and contradictory: champions constructed themselves as belonging to prevailing designations of identities within their constituency that afforded the most scope for collaborative action i.e., champions identified with their constituency. At the same time, they counter-identified from accepted designations by differentiating themselves from its core *and* dis-identified by constructing themselves as closer to identities in the other constituency.

Interactions with other Actors

Our second research question focuses on how the identity work of champions interacted with the other groups identified earlier i.e., skeptics, wannabe champions and naysayers.

Champions and Skeptics

Champions in both industry and community had to deal with skeptics inside their own constituency. Industry champions reported to managers whose identities were far closer to the traditional core industry identity, regardless of how consultative and progressive the company.

We need to be profitable, we're a public company and, yes, we sell services and drugs and this is our *raison d'être*, like it or not (manager).

The collaborative strategy revolved around companies sharing the community-based relationships that they had built over time with competitors. The idea of sharing hard-won social ties did not appeal to all managers:

I've built relationships ... and if each [other] company tries the same thing, it will dissolve the impact of our consultations (manager).

Accordingly, champions often came into conflict with those who supported more traditional ways of operating.

Sometimes [person X – an industry champion] fights. [X] fights with commercial people; [X] fights with us because they are defending the community (manager).

These industry skeptics could easily have become opponents of the strategy – senior managers had the power to shut the initiative down and transfer (or even fire) individual employees. Certainly, there were times when they did not approve individual initiatives linked to the collaboration proposed by champions.

We're willing to provide the knowledge and the skills but I'm not willing to provide money to do things that don't fit with our strategic framework (manager).

As a result, industry champions had to manage their relationships with these skeptics. It meant that they could not become so much like the community "other" that they lost the support of their managers, while at the same time they could not risk losing the connection to their partners in the community. In the following quotation, an industry champion of the collaboration talks about the tensions involved in having to tell community members that senior management was not willing to fund a particular program:

So I have to tell them [the community] that we're not there for them ... I really feel very crummy about it. I had a hard time to really bring my mind and, you know, to play the role, the professional corporate affairs role. I got a lot of kudos from my boss for having actually done that because my boss knew my heart was in supporting it. So it was a difficult one [to tell the community that the funding would not be forthcoming] ... I was telling [my colleague] all about this in the car.

And I said, afterwards: “How did I do? How did I do [when I told the community]?” And [my colleague] said: “You did well. You did well.” I tried. I practised all the way there [to the meeting to tell the community] (employee).

The situation in the community was more complicated. To obtain the right to speak on behalf of the community, champions had to construct themselves as identities with high legitimacy: HIV+ and, typically, volunteers in PWA organizations. In so doing, they not only empowered themselves, they also empowered skeptics in activist organizations, who had similar identities. As community champions engaged in identity work to reinforce their credentials as legitimate representatives, they also increased the legitimacy of potential opponents. Furthermore, although champions engaged in identity work to show that activist identities lacked the ability to speak to potential industry partners, they could not completely negate their power. Champions were forced to negotiate with skeptics, who became better positioned to shape and possibly block the collaborative strategy as a result of the champions’ own identity work. Skeptics were thus able to impose safeguards to ensure that CTAC was set up with sufficient distance from the industry and enough accountability to ensure that its members could not be easily co-opted.

If CTAC does sell-out at any one day, my support’s gone ... I’ve had frank conversations and I’ve said: ‘I think you’re getting too cozy! I haven’t seen you say anything pretty awful about [a pharmaceutical company] lately on this issue and before you used to be out there in the front with the battle.’ And anger and rage is part of what AIDS is about ... If we don’t show that emotion then we’re being co-opted (community member).

Champions were, then, constantly struggling with skeptics, who could have easily become outright opponents, given their initial reservations about CTAC.

I had a lot of second thoughts about CTAC after that meeting and that is why I decided to get out of it ... I wasn't sure that we should be saying that CTAC is the voice (community member).

Skeptics were concerned that the champions might engage in some sort of “sell-out”, in which case, they were prepared to use their power to bring down the collaboration.

In sum, as collaboration brings together partners from different constituencies, champions face tensions: they must be careful not to become too much like the “other” that they lose the support of their core constituency. Moreover, in cases where both champions and potential opponents have similar identities, engaging in identity work to empower oneself may also empower the opposition. On the other hand, if these opponents can be brought on board, they begin to do identity work on behalf of the champions. For example, the following quotation is that of an industry skeptic talking about an industry champion:

I don't know if you've met with [Person Y]. You'll enjoy meeting with him. He is really a great person. He was [successful] through all the years because he is so respectful of people. Because he is so respectful of differences he was able to get close to the community and [that] impacts back on our business. ... He was always kind of out of the box really (manager).

Similarly, a sceptical community member passed a favourable comment on CTAC:

We need it [CTAC]. It's a critical force. People look at [the champions] and they just say they're incorruptible (community member).

Our analysis showed that by the time that CTAC was established, skeptics on both sides talked positively about the collaborative strategy and its champions in both constituencies. This shows that skeptics need not necessarily become outright opponents and, if convinced of the merits of the strategy, do identity work on behalf of champions. In our case, champions were

successful in ensuring that most of those who initially advocated against the collaborative strategy and were active in influencing it confined their opposition to skepticism.

Champions and Wannabe Champions

The identity work that empowered champions also disempowered other actors who supported the strategy, but who were too “different”. These actors wanted to be (“wannabe”) champions, but their marginalization meant they were largely inactive. In the industry, those who worked in the less community-oriented companies were excluded. For example, in one company, referred to as “the evil empire” in the community, employees were excluded, not only by the community, but also by employees of more consultative companies. By working for such companies, they were “too” different to be champions, even though they were supportive of the change and had features associated with acceptable identities (such as working in liaison positions or having worked for compassionate companies in the past). In the following quotation, one such employee tries to engage in identity work to draw attention to the aspects of identity that are similar to community members:

The perception is that manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs make a lot of money so what I always try to do is to try and explain to them what my reality is, who my bosses are, what I have to do for a living, how I live versus what they have to do, what my life is. I have kids. I have a house. I have to work here. I have enormous amounts of responsibilities. I have enormous amounts of pressure. So that is my reality. I know what your reality is, now listen to my reality. You have to humanize this you know. If this is a manufacturer who is completely dehumanized, they cannot understand when you humanize it to my level, and say: “Look this is my life, I am trying to help you, so please help me. There is a limit to where I can go before I lose my job” (employee).

However, this attempt to identify with the community failed, and neither individual nor company were active in influencing the collaborative strategy.

In the community, individuals who were not HIV+ and who were paid employees of ASOs found it virtually impossible participate in the activities that led to the new strategy. The quotation below indicates the frustration of one wannabe champion:

Most people think that people in this movement should, to begin with, be HIV+.

[Also] if you're in leadership ... you shouldn't be paid ... Those two pieces sort of explain why I'm stepping down (ASO employee).

This individual goes on to make a plea to be taken seriously – as a person living with AIDS, despite not being HIV+:

First I'm a person living with HIV. I don't have the virus in my body. I'm not infected with HIV but I'm living with HIV in this aspect of my life [which] is impacted by HIV... It reduces my legitimacy because I don't have the virus in my body and because I'm a paid person who works in this movement.... I finally had to out myself and say, "I don't have HIV... I'm almost the enemy.

Despite supporting the strategy, wannabes were forced out of the meetings that led to CTAC.

Both these attempts at identity work by wannabes failed: some aspects of identity are non-negotiable. In the case of the industry, the company affiliation was important: individuals who worked for traditional pharmaceutical companies were unable to participate in key activities, even if they had previously worked for consultative companies. In the case of the community, organizational affiliation (PWA organization), employment status (volunteer) and, particularly, health (HIV+) were particularly important. So, even though they supported the collaborative strategy and wanted to be more involved in shaping it, wannabes were marginalized throughout.

Champions and Naysayers

The identity work of the champions successfully sidelined some actors who defined themselves as opponents of the collaborative strategy. In the community, naysayers included freelancers – PHAs who were active on treatment issues but without any formal organizational affiliation, and who had developed individualized links to particular companies. CTAC was a threat to them because, by formalizing the system of consultation and increasing accountability, their freedom to benefit from company resources was reduced. Champions took steps to undermine freelancers by pointing out that, because they accepted industry funding but were not accountable to community organizations; they had no right to speak on behalf of their home constituency. Freelancers were in fact *too* close to potential industry partners. So, while they had collaborative potential, they were sidelined and played no part in the collaborative strategy. On the industry side, naysayers were individuals without any history of working with the community, and who were associated with the traditional companies. As a result, they had little impact on the collaborative strategy, although they were eventually converted to the collaborative strategy and even provided funding for CTAC once it was established.

Actors who are opposed but inactive are clearly far less of a threat than actors who are opposed and active, and champions may feel they can afford to ignore them. However, there is always the potential for active opponents to enlist naysayers as coalition partners. Champions may then choose to engage in identity work to delegitimize their identities and reduce the chances that they will become an active threat.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our research explored the situated identity work undertaken by champions of collaborative strategy to bring about strategic change. The case study showed how certain individuals were able to exploit particular categories of identity available in their specific context

to construct themselves in ways that allowed them to legitimately speak both *for* their own constituency and *to* potential collaborative partners. In so doing, champions were able to influence the strategy making process that resulted in a new multiparty, cross-sectoral collaboration. This accomplishment involved three contradictory yet simultaneous processes of identity work by the champions in relation to other actors: *identification* with their respective constituencies and, specifically, categories associated with high legitimacy; *counter-identification* from their respective constituencies by constructing themselves as different from its core members; and *dis-identification* away from their constituency towards their collaborative partners by constructing themselves as being on the periphery of their constituency – closer to and capable of bridging to their collaborative partner.

Our study highlights the complexity and strategic nature of identity work: self and other were contingent, fluid constructions; actors engaged simultaneously in several, contradictory identity work processes; and different aspects of their identities were foregrounded as they related to various “others”. The identity work of champions did not revolve around simple binary oppositions, but, rather multiple relationships with multiple other identities: who was “self” and who was “other” was never fixed. So, while identification followed a process of identity construction typically associated with “othering” i.e., a description of one’s own group in opposition to and separate from less desirable others; counter-identification and dis-identification were somewhat different. In the case of counter-identification, similar groups that would normally constitute the “self” category were repudiated in a process one might describe as “othering the self”. With dis-identification, champions associated themselves with their collaborative partners; identities normally conceptualized as belonging to some other and different constituency were recognized as being applicable to themselves – a process one might describe as “selfing the other”.

While our study provides important insights into the complexity of identity work, it has limitations. First, a single case study is a useful way to explore the complex and situated nature of these complex processes but its generalizability is inevitably limited, and further research is necessary to examine the relevance of these processes to other situations. Second, we relied primarily on interview data to explore how individuals talked about self and other. Future research might use ethnographic methods or focus on naturally occurring talk to conduct a more finely grained analysis of how actors construct their identities in different ways to different audiences. Third, while we identify the existence of three concurrent but contradictory identification processes that occurred over the duration of the study, we do not plot any detailed temporal flow. Other studies might conduct a more detailed chronological analysis, relying on “real-time naturally-occurring talk to examine, for example, whether actors must engage in identification before they can initiate dis- or counter-identification. Fourth, in attempting to explore the interactive nature of identity work, our study is restricted to the interactive dynamics of champions in relation to only three other categories of actor, and future research might consider more complex networks of interactions. Despite these caveats, our work has a number of implications for research and practice.

Implications for Research

Our study also contributes to the strategy literature in a number of ways. In particular, it suggests the need for a greater emphasis on individual identity and the situated nature of identity in the strategy literature. The work on generic leadership styles and strategy-making by leaders and entrepreneurs could be enhanced in this regard. First, rather than simply focus on the style of particular champions, CEOs and leaders, research could include interactions among champions and other strategic actors. It should also recognize that strategic change is not reducible to a simple dichotomy between those who want change – the champions – and those who do not, who

are usually ignored under the dismissive term of “resistance”; instead, there are a variety of positions that strategic actors may take (skeptics, wannabes, naysayers, not to mention other possible categories not found here). To understand processes of strategic change, researchers need to understand the style of individual champions in relation to these different groups. Second, this body of work should contextualize its understanding of style. Despite ever expanding categorizations, this work assumes that styles have universal meanings across different organizations and industries. Future research might provide more finely grained studies of how the meaning and impact of styles vary according to the context.

Our findings concerning the processes of identification, counter-identification and dis-identification are potentially relevant to a range of strategies. In our case, the identity work of champions was linked to particular constituencies among HIV/AIDS industry and community groups. One would expect to see similar processes in other instances of cross-sector collaborative strategy making, albeit with different situated identities. Similarly, the success of strategic alliances, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions may depend not only on the way in which champions identify with their own constituency (i.e., their organization), but also whether they are able to simultaneously repudiate something of what their organization is and engage with the partner on some fundamental level (cf. Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). Collective “nonmarket strategies” (Baron, 1995) may also involve identity work. For instance, divergent collective strategies in the oil industry, where European companies such as BP and Shell withdrew from an industry association opposed to the Kyoto Protocol, while US companies like Exxon continued to support it (Levy & Kolk, 2002), may be linked to the ability – or inability – of managers to engage in contradictory identification processes as a means to manage divergent pressures.

Issues of self and other are center-stage in these various forms of collective strategy (Astley, 1984) because different identities must be reconciled as organizations are brought

together and new ones formed. Yet, when one considers the way in which other organizations and groups – partners, customers, suppliers, and other external groups (e.g., Bartel, 2001) – feature prominently in strategy, it is clear that identity issues and processes pertain to strategic change more generally. In fact, all organizational processes, in bringing together individuals from different teams, departments, divisions and organizations, juxtapose self and other (cf. Kilduff, Funk & Mehra, 1997) in potentially contradictory and complex identification processes. Thus subsequent research might investigate whether and how processes of identification, counter-identification and dis-identification are relevant to a wider range of strategies. Boundary spanners in a variety of strategic positions might be more adept if they can engage in these contradictory processes. For example, decisions to enter foreign markets might be more effectively championed by individuals who are able to understand how other countries work (counter-identification) *because* they can repudiate or distance themselves from their own company and its home country (dis-identification), at the same time as doing so for the benefit of their company (identification). Similarly, to truly understand the competition or the customer may hinge on processes that involve more than simply relating to the other, and demand some rejection of self. Some evidence for this is provided by Meyerson & Sculley (1995), who have argued that tempered radicals are helpful in organizational change because they are able to combine insider knowledge with outsider distance and to critique and/or champion both the status quo and radical change options.

Our study connects to a small but growing body of work on strategic changes that might be described as “identity-salient,” by which we mean that the strategic change resonates with and mobilizes individuals with particular identities. Studies have explored the adoption of human resource policies that are “friendly” to women, or to gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people (Creed & Scully, 2000; Creed, Scully & Austin, 2002) and the role of individuals’ views about the natural environment in championing ecologically responsible change (Bansal, 2003).

These writers have shown how individuals deploy and construct social identity in bringing about change (Creed & Scully, 2000) and advocate “hiring people who are passionately concerned about an issue” who can act as “competent issue sellers” and “facilitate organizational responsiveness” (Bansal, 2003: 523). So far, this research has chosen very specific examples of strategy, where identity issues are clearly evident. Our study broadens this focus and begins to bridge this specialized work to the mainstream strategy literature.

Our study also contributes to the work on identification and organizational identity which, as mentioned above, has so far focused on convergence – identification means that individuals identify themselves *with* the organization and organizational identity is formed out of convergence *around* identity. Even the work on multiple identities tends to assume convergent identifications, albeit with more than one identity. Within this frame, the question of change is problematic – how are individuals pulled away from existing convergent identifications and how do new organizational identities arise if they are constructed through identification processes? By showing how identity is constructed from identification, counter-identification and dis-identification, our work shows how the seeds of change are always embedded within the status quo. Within contradictory identification processes lay countervailing ideas that can generate adaptation and mutation, as well as provide space for multiplicity and diversity. In this way, we help to provide a theoretical basis for a more complex view of individual and organizational identity in a way that is analogous to the work on culture. While the culture literature has, in recent years, moved away from the domination of strong cultures and actively engaged with the challenges posed by fragmentation and ambiguity (Martin, 2001; Alvesson, 2002), the literature on organizational identity has struggled to do so, despite the recognition that the two concepts are related (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). We argue that viewing organizational and individual identity as interrelated, ongoing social accomplishments borne of counter-identification and dis-

identification, as much as identification, provides a way to move beyond existing static conceptualizations.

Our work also indicates how a methodological focus on identity as constructed through communication and language, rather than identity as cognition (cf. Weisenfeld, Raghuram & Garud, 1999) is helpful in exploring the ambiguity, contradictions and processual nature of identity construction. Communication – instances of talk and text – can be observed on an ongoing basis and their relation to action can be noted. Thus changes can be tracked over time; attitudes and beliefs, on the other hand, can be surveyed only at discrete moments in time. Tracking communicative acts may make it easier to discern disjunctures and contradictions than asking about attitudes because respondents may find it difficult or feel it is inappropriate to articulate contradiction and hesitancy. Moreover, respondents may feel – or claim to feel – certainty, even though they actually communicate ambivalence and contradiction: what people feel or think may not be the same as what they do. Despite some engagement with the concept of sensemaking, the work on identification and organizational identity still focuses very much on cognitive processes and, as such, may not be well suited to uncover ongoing tensions and contradictions (Hardy et al, 2005). If we are to adopt a fully processual approach to strategic change, it is not enough to treat it as a discrete *end point* of social and political processes – it should be viewed as something that is *always* in the act of “becoming” (cf. Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Incorporating individual identity into the study of strategic change and acknowledging the contradictory, concurrent and ongoing communicative processes that underpin it enhances the prospects for a truly dynamic conceptualizations of strategy and identity.

Implications for Practice

Our study has a number of practical implications. First, it shows how the autonomous entrepreneurial activity of individuals can initiate strategic change from below (cf. Burgelman,

1983). Industry champions were middle managers; in the community, they were members of small organizations. Nonetheless, they brought about an important new strategy because of their identity work. To engage successfully in such identity work, champions should first consider who is advocating for and against the change. Secondly, they should ascertain which individuals are likely to be in a position to influence the strategy, by assessing the legitimacy of the situated identities. This involves de-composing identities into their constituent dimensions and analyzing the meanings attached to them. Those actors whose identities do not conform to prevailing norms of legitimacy are likely to be less of a threat than those that do. They are also likely to be less effective as coalition partners, and champions may be better off distancing themselves from them rather than undermining the strategic project by associating it with illegitimate identities. The third step is to consider one's own identity and whether it is associated with – or can be constructed as possessing – the relevant dimensions. When constructing their identities in particular ways, champions should also consider the implications for other actors and whether their identity work will empower opponents.

Our findings also indicate that champions were not the only influential actors: skeptics were also important in shaping the strategy. While the presence of opponents seems potentially dangerous for champions, the presence of skeptics can be beneficial. In our case, they played a “devil’s advocacy” role in the collaboration and, in so doing, obligated champions to refine the strategy in a process similar to dialectical inquiry (e.g., Schweiger, Sandberg & Ragan, 1986). They placed limits on the nature and scope of the collaboration, stopping it from becoming too inward looking and preventing champions from being seduced by their potential partners. In the community, skeptics guarded against champions selling out or becoming coopted; in the industry, skeptics ensured that the implementation of the collaborative strategy was profitable and consistent with the overall corporate strategy. In other words, skeptics were the voices of

conscience in the home constituency, ensuring that interests were not sacrificed by champions getting too close to the other side. Our study thus shows that facing opponents with a high degree of legitimacy is not necessarily negative: rather than simply dismissing concerns as resistance, champions should seek to harness skepticism in a way that improves the strategy.

To conclude, the particular aspects of identity that matter to strategic change are highly situated – they emerge from the particular context and can be predicted only within that context. Moreover, while some can be easily remedied by, for example, changing jobs; others are more problematic e.g., acquiring a disease. Drawing general conclusions regarding aspects of identity that rule actors in or out of strategic change is impossible; researchers and practitioners should therefore be sensitive to the particular context in which strategic change is occurring.

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Table 1: Categorization of community and industry actors

	Advocated for CTAC?	Advocated against CTAC?	Active in influencing CTAC?	Actor's category in relation to the collaborative strategy
<i>Community Actors</i>				
C1: Treatment Advocate	Yes		Yes	Champion
C2: Treatment Advocate	Yes		Yes	Champion
C3: Treatment Advocate	Yes		Yes	Champion
C4: Treatment Advocate	Yes		Yes	Champion
C5: Paid ASO Employee	Yes			Wannabe
C6: Paid ASO Employee	Yes			Wannabe
C7: Paid ASO Employee	Yes			Wannabe
C8: Paid ASO Employee	Yes			Wannabe
C9: Paid ASO Employee	Yes			Wannabe
C10: Treatment Advocate		Yes	Yes	Skeptic
C11: Activist		Yes	Yes	Skeptic
C12: Activist		Yes	Yes	Skeptic
C13: Activist		Yes		Naysayer
C14: Freelancer		Yes		Naysayer
C15: Freelancer		Yes		Naysayer
<i>Industry Actors</i>				
I1: HIV liaison manager in a progressive company	Yes		Yes	Champion
I2: HIV liaison manager in progressive company	Yes		Yes	Champion
I3: HIV liaison manager in progressive company	Yes		Yes	Champion
I4: HIV liaison manager in progressive company	Yes		Yes	Champion
I5: HIV liaison manager in traditional company	Yes			Wannabe
I6: Marketing manager in traditional company	Yes			Wannabe
I7: Senior manager in progressive company		Yes	Yes	Skeptic
I8: Senior manager in progressive company		Yes	Yes	Skeptic
I9: Senior manager in traditional company		Yes		Naysayer
I10: Senior manager in traditional company		Yes		Naysayer

Table 2(a): Identity Work of Community Champions

	Identification with Constituency		Counter-identification from Core of Constituency		Dis-identification towards Collaborative Partner	
	<i>Champions define self in relation to existing designations of identities.</i>	<i>Champions accept prevailing evaluations of interests associated with existing identities</i>	<i>Champions present existing designations of core identities as inadequate.</i>	<i>Champions recognize interests associated with core identities run counter to collaboration</i>	<i>Champions define self in relation to identities of other constituency and vice versa</i>	<i>Champions recognize interests associated with identities of other constituency are consistent with collaboration</i>
C1	Defines self in terms of treatment advocacy, treatment expertise and as member of PWA organization. Status as PHA is very important aspect of self.	Activists and advocates are willing and able to help the community. PHAs in PWA organizations are knowledgeable.	PHAs from PWA organizations had hidden agendas with regard to CTAC.	Certain PHAs and ASO employees only want to participate in CTAC because of the glamour; they won't do the work.	Particular pharmaceutical company representatives (I1, I2) are similar to community members; they are friends, confidants, and important allies in effort to restructure the field.	Industry is beginning to forge new relationships with the HIV/AIDS community, fulfilling their mandate to be responsive to community needs, and moving towards 'good corporate philanthropist' ideal.
C2	Defines self as PHA and in terms of treatment advocacy, treatment expertise, member of PWA organization, and history in HIV/AIDS.	Advocates are expert, active on committees, important, respected.	Certain PHAs only participate for the perks. Some pharmaceutical companies ignore the community and take decisions driven purely by profit motives.	Because certain PHAs had personal agendas, consultative meetings were unproductive. Some companies are not committed and could pull out.	Like progressive pharmaceutical companies, self is concerned with other diseases; this effort could transform all industry-consumer relationships.	Collaboration is in interests of both community and industry as it goes beyond AIDS and acts as model for other diseases.
C3	Defines self as PHA and in terms of treatment advocacy and history of activism.	Advocates are appropriate community representative and more appropriate than ASO employees. Activists are leaders in the field.	PHAs are not willing to volunteer to fill the various advisory and treatment advocacy positions in the community.	Certain PHAs are engaged in power struggles that hinder CTAC, demanding representation without having treatment expertise and resulting in an unworkable committee.	Identifies self as having a longstanding relationship with pharmaceutical employee I1, who is knowledgeable, understanding and consultative.	Progressive companies have important expertise and know how to work with advocates in ways that benefit them and the community.
C4	Defines self as PHA and in terms of treatment expertise.	PHAs are more important than ASO employees and most appropriate community representative.	PHAs are not volunteering for committee positions.	Reactionary anger of community towards industry should be put aside. Industry must be given a chance.	Feels close to employees of Company A.	By collaborating with employees of Company A, their senior managers take community considerations into account when making business decisions.

Table 2(b): Identity Work of Industry Champions

	Identification with Constituency		Counter-identification from Core of Constituency		Dis-identification towards Collaborative Partner	
	<i>Champions define self in relation to existing designations of identities.</i>	<i>Champions accept prevailing evaluations of interests associated with existing identities</i>	<i>Champions present existing designations of core identities as inadequate.</i>	<i>Champions recognize interests associated with core identities run counter to collaboration</i>	<i>Champions define self in relation to identities of other constituency and vice versa</i>	<i>Champions recognize interests associated with identities of other constituency are consistent with collaboration</i>
I1	Defines self in relation to HIV/AIDS expertise, career in progressive pharmaceutical companies, and long history associated with HIV/AIDS.	Defines self and own company (A) as leader in consulting the community. Employee I2 is exceptional in terms of relations with the community.	Companies are different in terms of values and some do not respect customers.	Senior managers lack respect for customers and need training. Senior managers do not understand partners in community. Senior managers are too cautious in consulting with the community.	Advocates are reasonable, professional and business-like, like self.	Because advocates are business-like, expert and support company goals, they can contribute to collaborative outcomes. Bringing in people from the community to work with employees is helpful for companies. Industry can learn from activism
I2	Defines self in terms of history of position in HIV/AIDS community liaison in a progressive company.	Own company (A) is progressive and exceptional, doing the right things.	Senior managers are too cautious in dealing with the community.	Senior managers deal with other stakeholders and don't prioritize collaboration with the community. Traditional company D should be viewed with suspicion.	Own company philosophically supports activism. Treatment advocates are like self; they are friends and allies.	Advocates are expert and therefore in demand and so it is in their interests to collaborate with benefits to industry and community.
I3	Defines self in relation to position in HIV/AIDSs community liaison.	Progressive companies are genuinely interested in listening to the community.	Many companies think in terms of competition only.	Collaboration among companies isn't common. Thinking in terms of competition is not right.	Treatment advocates are friends, similar to self.	Industry and community can learn from each other.
I4	Defines self in terms of expertise in HIV /AIDS and career in progressive pharmaceutical companies.	Own company (C) is exceptional. HIV/AIDS liaison employees are exceptional. Companies A and B are more helpful, consultative and less profit-oriented than companies D and E.	Senior managers don't want to do the things that are necessary to deal with needs of HIV/AIDS.	Senior managers tend to be male and homophobic, and can't or won't collaborate with the community. Senior manager are too cautious in regard to collaborating with the community.	Like self, advocates are educated, fun and productive to work with; they are more like business people. Own company does not promote/market but educates and informs, like community.	Industry and community have convergent expertise. Because advocates are more like business people, together we can build CTAC together. Own company is moving away from traditional practices. Self is driving changes.

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