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Building Character: The Formation of a Hybrid Organizational Identity in a Social Enterprise

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ABSTRACT The formation of a hybrid organizational identity is a significant challenge for many social enterprises. Drawing on in-depth longitudinal data from the first three years of a successful social enterprise – Fairphone, founded in Amsterdam – we induce an empirically grounded theoretical model of how a hybrid organizational identity is formed. We identify a general process of organizational identity formation, with founders, leaders and members experimenting with different organizational characters describing 'who they are' as well as with alternative social impact strategies defining 'what they do'. As part of this experimental process, we elaborate the role of a key leadership process – 'rekeying', which involves leaders re-figuring prior understandings into more dual readings – which we found facilitates ongoing adaptation and helps members of the organization to become progressively better able at combining multiple objectives and values as part of a shared hybrid identity. Our theoretical model of hybrid organizational identity formation has a number of direct implications for ongoing research on organizational identity formation and hybrid organizations.

Keywords: hybrid organizations, leadership re-keying, organizational identity formation, sensemaking, social entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Social enterprises face the challenge of developing a coherent hybrid organizational identity that combines commercial and social objectives and values (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Battilana and Lee, 2014; Smith and Besharov, 2019). A hybrid organizational

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identity consists of two different identities (in terms of labels, claims and meanings) that 'would not normally be expected to go together' (Albert and Whetten, 1985, p. 271). Whilst there is a burgeoning literature on the role of identity portrayals and identity judgments within nascent enterprises (Fisher et al., 2016; Navis and Glynn, 2011), most of the research to date has focused on new ventures and enterprises in general; exploring how entrepreneurs and other stakeholders negotiate the appropriate identity of a commercial enterprise (Drori et al., 2009; Fisher et al., 2016).

There has been far less research on this subject in the context of social enterprises (Battilana and Lee, 2014; Battilana et al., 2017) even though social entrepreneurs may experience such identity management as particularly challenging (Waldron et al., 2016). Compared to a simpler set of referent categories for many new commercial ventures, social enterprises typically involve hybrid and thus more complex organizational identities (Battilana and Lee, 2014; Battilana et al., 2017; Besharov, 2014) that are much harder to define for starting social entrepreneurs. The seemingly paradoxical nature of simultaneously pursuing a commercial and social mission may also pull social entrepreneurs and the employees that they have recruited into the organization in different directions (Ashforth and Reingen, 2014; Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Santos et al., 2015; Smith and Besharov, 2019) potentially undermining their joint identity and their ability to collectively work on a shared dual mission.

The main questions that this body of work thus raises are, on the one hand, how a hybrid organizational identity emerges within nascent social enterprises and, on the other, what social entrepreneurs can do as part of that process to not only foster the emergence of a hybrid identity but also sustain a sense of hybridity amongst their employees as the enterprise grows and develops. We address both questions through a longitudinal and in-depth qualitative study of the Dutch social enterprise Fairphone, which produces and markets an environmentally and socially 'fair' smartphone. With our study of Fairphone, we trace the process of hybrid organizational identity formation, a topic which has been neglected to date, and document how different recalibrations by the leadership team of the organization's identity formed the basis for a consensually agreed on hybrid organizational identity.

In doing so, we contribute to existing research in at least two ways. First, we unfold and theoretically qualify the processes of hybrid organizational identity formation within a social enterprise. With our study, we do not only address this gap in the literature (Gioia et al., 2013b; Pratt, 2016) but also offer a new theoretical perspective on organizational identity emergence by conceptualizing hybrid identity formation as a process of character development (see Selznick, 2008) in which experimenting with alternate identities and collectively working through tensions is foundational to the formation of a hybrid organizational identity. Second, we elaborate, as part of this process, the role of leaders in envisioning a hybrid identity and in helping others in the organization to combine business and social aspects into a coherent whole. We conceptualize this process as 're-keying' based on how we saw leaders re-figure and re-ground prior views of the organization's identity into more integrative 'hybrid' understandings. Such rekeying is helpful in the formation of a hybrid identity as it supports the sensemaking of members of a social enterprise and enables them to become increasingly better at combining multiple objectives and values as part of a hybrid identity. Leader re-keying is thus a specific activity

through which leaders may help an organization form a hybrid identity, which adds to our understanding of specific leader roles and leadership activity in hybrid organizations (Besharov, 2014; Smith and Besharov, 2019).

We integrate both sets of insights into a grounded theoretical model of hybrid organizational identity formation that highlights the role and importance of leaders continuously re-keying the organizational identity in such a way that it not only allows them to experiment with different hybrid identities but also, in the process, fosters the organization's ability to stretch between, and blend, commercial and social aspects as part of a coherent hybrid identity for the enterprise as a whole.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: HYBRID ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITIES

Social enterprises with hybrid identities have grown in number in recent years (Battilana and Lee, 2014). As hybrid organizations, they combine aspects of business and charitable or non-profit activities (Battilana and Lee, 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014; Moss et al., 2011; McMullen and Warnick, 2016). For example, they may provide commercial loans to marginalized communities (Battilana and Dorado, 2010) or provide employment opportunities for homeless people using a commercial franchising model (Tracey et al., 2011). Here, we motivate our study by briefly reviewing existing research on the formation of hybrid social-business identities in social enterprises. The literature that we review involves work on founders and founding teams in social enterprises, and the emerging stream of work on organizational identity formation and emergence.

Founders and Hybrid Identities

Recent research on organizational hybridity has focused on the personal experiences and personal identity of founding social entrepreneurs (Wry and York, 2017; Zuzul and Tripsas, 2020). Specifically, research has focused on the degree to which individual entrepreneurs have had prior experience in either social (non-profit, civic, charity) or business settings, or both. Subsequently, this literature explores how such experiences determine an entrepreneur's self-definition with respect to their social enterprises, and what activities and goals they emphasize and pursue within their ventures (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Powell and Baker, 2014, 2017; Wry and York, 2017; York et al., 2016; Zuzul and Tripsas 2020). In taking this line of analysis, a personal identity-based approach 'endogenizes' different and potentially conflicting experiences, values and logics *within the individual* (Wry and York, 2017).

In a now classic study of 49 founders in the sports equipment industry, Fauchart and Gruber (2011), for example, found that most entrepreneurs adhere to a specific 'community' or 'commercial' identity type, although a few were able to blend such logics as part of their own personal identity. Where they did so, this seemed to be based on prior experience in both business and community settings or in fact to be more tactically triggered by 'external pressures', such as requests from investors that led them to adjust their identity. Given that they focused primarily on singular identity definitions at a point in time, Fauchart and Gruber (2011, p. 941) cover hybrid identities only as an 'extension' to their

analysis. However, they do note that 'our analysis indicates that founders with hybrid identities evolve in many different and – from an identity perspective – hard to-predict directions' (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011, p. 949).

The general value of this stream of work (O'Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016; Wry and York, 2017; York et al., 2016) is that it highlights different personal identity types and the associated individual processes of sensemaking that founders of a social enterprise go through as they potentially reconcile different values (Besharov, 2014). However, building on this work, it is also likely, we argue, that such sensemaking does not happen in isolation or stays necessarily fixed over time (see Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). In other words, rather than looking at the internalized identity and identity roles of a social entrepreneur in isolation or at a particular point in time (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Wry and York, 2017), it seems important to account for how specific events as well as social interactions with others in the organization affects the founder's identity-related sensemaking over time (as hinted at by Fauchart and Gruber, 2011).

In addition, most of this work (e.g., Wry and York, 2017) has focused on single founders, analogous to the broader entrepreneurship literature (Zuzul and Tripsas, 2020), even in instances where the venture involves a multi-founder team. As such, there has, with a few exceptions (Powell and Baker, 2017), been little research on the interactional processes 'through which an assemblage of individual founders becomes a group with a shared collective identity' (Powell and Baker, 2017, p. 2382).

In our study, we had unique access to the founders and to the leadership team of Fairphone and we were able to track how they individually and collectively made sense of their nascent social enterprise. Specifically, we were able to explore how the collective sensemaking of the founders and of the entire leadership team evolved over time; documenting the interpretive struggles and disagreements inside the team as well as their eventual collective agreement on the identity and purpose of their social enterprise.

The Formation of Organizational Identity

Existing research on social entrepreneurship explicitly calls for more research that considers hybrid organizing as a process of organizational identity formation (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Battilana and Lee, 2014; Battilana et al., 2017). At the same time, work on organizational identity in organizational theory highlights the formation of organizational identity in newly created enterprises as an important research agenda, given that most work to date has focused on identity change in established firms (Gioia et al., 2010; Gioia et al., 2013). Compared to work on identity change (Cloutier and Ravasi, 2020), research on organizational identity formation is still in its infancy (Ashforth et al., 2011; Cornelissen et al., 2016), and has focused primarily on 'particular aspects of organizational identity formation rather than the overall processes through which it occurs' (Gioia et al., 2013b, p. 155).

In addition, the few existing qualitative studies on the formation of hybrid identities in social enterprises (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Battilana et al., 2015; Smith and Besharov, 2019) suggest that as a result of internal and external pressures, the hybrid identities of social enterprises may break down before the enterprise reaches a sustainable level of development and growth. For example, in their study of commercial microfinance in

Bolivia, Battilana and Dorado (2010) observed that the hybrid organizational identity broke down because employees were more strongly wedded to one of the two constituent identities of commercial microfinance than the hybrid organizational identity as a whole (see Besharov, 2014). In other instances (Smith and Besharov, 2019), social entrepreneurs are able to actively manage such tensions, grow their ventures, and successfully ensure that employees, investors and customers value both sides to a 'dual' organizational identity instead of forming partial and segmented forms of identification. In their 10 year study of Digital Divide Data (DDD), Smith and Besharov (2019) observed the founders and leaders of the enterprise constantly recalibrating and reinterpreting their identity in response to strategic and operational tensions that emerged as the venture developed. They also record how initial investments in partnerships and organizational structures reflecting DDD's dual mission ensured that 'guardrails' were in place to avoid mission drift when the organization experimented with new practices.

Based on these studies, there is a need for research that elaborates the 'deep processes' of organizational identity formation (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 182) in the context of a hybrid identity (Battilana and Lee, 2014; Battilana et al., 2017; Battilana et al., 2015). Building on the foundational work of Gioia et al. (2010; 2013), our study documents the identity formation process in a hybrid social enterprise. In doing so, we address the dearth of research on hybrid identity emergence in an 'institutionally complex setting' (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 183). As Pratt (2016) argues, there has been very little research to date on the processes and contents of hybrid identity development.

Hybrid Identity Emergence as a Process of Character Development

Building on these two streams of literature (founder identity, organizational identity formation), we identify a distinct need for more research that focuses on the ways in which founders, leaders and members of a nascent social enterprise come to collectively define a hybrid identity for themselves. In nascent social enterprises, unlike established organizations, an organization's identity – members' notions of 'who we are' (Gioia et al., 2013) and 'what we do' (Ravasi and Phillips, 2011) – first needs to be formed and before a fully settled hybrid identity emerges. Members of such organizations are likely to work through alternative definitions before they agree on a collectively shared definition of their organization's identity (see Gioia et al., 2013). This is the case as complex hybrid identities are much harder to define (Battilana and Lee, 2014; Battilana et al., 2017; Besharov, 2014) and as the evolving nature of the venture – from launch to growth – may direct the attention of founders, leaders and other members of the social enterprise to ongoing organizational and business challenges away from its hybrid ideal (Santos et al., 2015; Smith and Besharov, 2019). Hence, in this context, the establishment of a hybrid organizational identity involves an active, ongoing process of sensemaking about the hybrid 'character' of the organization (see Selznick, 2008) until the point that agreement is reached on a common hybrid identity and where we can say that a new hybrid organizational identity has emerged.

Taking this perspective as a starting point, and extending the founders literature (Powell and Baker, 2017), we, first of all, assume that founders and leaders of hybrid organizations have a particular role to play in such a process of organizational identity formation.

They may not only for themselves recalibrate what the venture stands for, but they may also actively seek to instil through their words and actions a particular hybrid identity in the organization and do so in ways that they believe help the organization achieve a dual mission of making a social impact in commercially viable ways. At the same time, and extending the literature on organizational identity emergence, the formation of a hybrid identity may however be far from a simple, linear process of leaders laying down a set of labels describing the organization's identity (Gioia et al., 2013). Rather, it may involve more complex collective sensemaking processes across leaders and members that involve both 'sayings' and 'doings' through which an organizational identity is construed and through which over time a collectively shared organizational identity potentially emerges and takes root within an organization (see Kreiner et al., 2015).

METHODS

The study we report in this paper is based on data that has been gathered in two separate inductive, qualitative research projects on the Amsterdam-based social enterprise Fairphone. As we explain below, we gathered rich longitudinal data through both projects over a three-year period covering the launch of the enterprise, its subsequent commercialization and an early stage of growth. In this way, we were able to examine up to a natural endpoint (Langley et al., 2013) how the hybrid identity of the enterprise emerged and how the leaders of the social enterprise redefined the nature of the enterprise over time and managed to shape the collectively held hybrid identity of the workforce as a whole.

Research Context: Fairphone

Fairphone had been the central creative concept behind an NGO-based awareness campaign between 2009 and 2012 about 'conflict minerals' in consumer electronic devices, such as smartphones (Akemu et al., 2016; Kim and Davis, 2016). Largely due to a lack of legal enforcement and the complexity of modern-day supply chains (Kim and Davis, 2016), consumer electronics firms source minerals that have been mined in conflict areas such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where militia force children to work in dangerous mines. In September 2009, Niza, an Amsterdam-based non-governmental organization (NGO), commissioned two friends – a public relations (PR) expert and product designer – to develop an awareness campaign. The friends invited the Dutch public to collectively design a hypothetical 'fair phone' as a way of raising awareness about conflict minerals in the consumer electronics supply chain. After the campaign ended in 2012, the two campaigners and a newly enrolled member participated in an entrepreneurship incubation program. They subsequently secured an investment of €400,000 from an angel investor. In January 2013, they launched Fairphone as a social enterprise with a mission to 'produce a seriously cool smartphone putting social values first'. At launch, the erstwhile product designer became CEO, and the other two campaigners co-founders. They in turn recruited a Communication Director, a Sustainability Director, a Communication Manager, and a Community Manager to launch the enterprise. As a

social enterprise, Fairphone's first key event involved a crowdfunding campaign between May and September 2013, culminating in a pre-order of 25,000 actual phones.

Data Collection

Our study, as mentioned, builds on data that were collected in two separate studies. The combined, longitudinal data set we collected over the 15-month period between October 2013 and January 2015 involves three data sources, namely semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and secondary documents. Below, we elaborate on these data sources in more detail and highlight the source of the data in one of the two studies.

Semi-structured interviews. In total, we conducted 79 interviews. Our informants included the 6 founding employees, members of Fairphone's leadership team (which included two founders), investors, staff, interns and former Fairphone associates. We summarize the interview data in Table I. At the start of both studies, interviews were geared towards building a coherent understanding of how Fairphone emerged, who was involved in shaping the enterprise, what Fairphone was trying to do and how the newly founded enterprise managed to carve out a space for itself in the mobile industry. Initially, thus, the interviews from both projects remained fairly general, so that interviewees were able to share with us their viewpoints and interpretations of what Fairphone was trying to achieve. For example, we asked interviewees about their background and position, how they thought about Fairphone's mission, and the personal and operational challenges that they experienced at that point in time (see Appendix 1 for our topic guide).

In the course of the investigation, however, it became clear to the researchers in both projects that most of the internal discussions and challenges revolved around Fairphone's identity formation. In particular, in the first two periods of Fairphone's existence (see Table II) key questions and tensions surfaced about Fairphone's hybrid identity, the relationship between its organizational identity and the product Fairphone was delivering, and, in a broader sense, Fairphone's social mission. These key questions were particularly salient within the founding and leadership teams (Ashforth and Reingen, 2014; Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Besharov, 2014).

Heeding this emergent insight, both projects started to adapt their interviews to better investigate challenges and tensions around Fairphone's hybrid identity formation. In both studies, this meant that besides interviewing staff across the organization, we also conducted multiple interviews with the founders and leadership team over time to capture their changing views of the organization's hybrid identity. The topic guides for these interviews also reflected this changed focus (see Appendix 2 for our adapted topic guide).

To increase the trustworthiness of the interview data, we let interviewees speak freely and asked them to describe specific events and how these unfolded over time. The interviews lasted around one hour on average. All but two interviews, for which we took detailed notes, were recorded and transcribed.

Participant observation. Given the particular nature of participant observation, we outline our data here as corresponding to the two projects. Between October 2013 and January 2015, one of the authors visited Fairphone's office 1–3 times per week (for a total of 130

field visits). During his field visits, he observed interactions among Fairphone staff in formal settings, such as weekly company and team meetings, and informal conversations during lunch breaks, weekly social events and annual Christmas dinners. He also participated in three offsite strategy meetings with Fairphone's leadership team. At those meetings he took minutes and acted as a neutral observer to the strategy discussions that took place. In the period February – December 2014, two other authors also visited the Fairphone office. Their observations encompassed 6 full days and include four one-on-one debrief sessions and two leadership team review sessions. All three authors kept detailed field notes (including audio recordings, pictures and/or memos) throughout the duration of the fieldwork. Table I offers details on the various events and meetings that were observed during our study.

Secondary data: company documents and external communication. Secondary data are an important third data source included in our study. The secondary data we drew on provided us with important additional insights into the hybrid identity formation processes within Fairphone. Crucially, the secondary data also enabled us to triangulate our findings and ensure the integrity of our analysis. Our secondary data may be divided roughly into two sub-sets; namely, internal company documents on the one hand, and external communication and newspaper articles on the other. Company documents, of which we collected 18 in total, included grant applications, financial reports, consumer reports, videos and strategic plans. These were primarily collected in the ethnographic study. In turn, external communication data included all texts that Fairphone had issued on its Facebook and Twitter accounts (292 Facebook posts and 1,021 tweets in total), which amounted to 132 pages of word-based text. We also retrieved 89 Dutch newspaper articles covering Fairphone from the LexisNexis database over the period January 2013 – April 2015. The external communication and newspaper data were collected in the case study. Table I provides a detailed overview of our data sources.

Analytic Approach: Merging Two Studies

Whilst our study of Fairphone began as two separate research projects they eventually converged into a common investigation (see Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). One of the authors had started an ethnographic study of Fairphone in October 2013, with the initial purpose of exploring the question of 'how does a new venture develop the capability to produce a complex product?'. As part of his ethnography, he observed meetings, participated in social events, interviewed employees and collected secondary data. At the same time, one of the other authors connected with Fairphone in February 2014 to discuss Fairphone's development from a communication perspective. In this parallel project, he and a third member of the author team started to investigate Fairphone from the perspective of category emergence (see Waldron et al., 2016), with an interest in exploring whether the qualification of 'fair' would eventually evolve into a separate market category in this industry. As part of this second study, the authors conducted interviews, attended meetings and collected archival documents. In addition, given their expert knowledge on communication, they developed a survey to chart Fairphone's buyers, online followers and supporters and they conducted a content analysis of public communication about the enterprise.

Table I. Summary of data

	Phase 1	*Phase 2*	*Phase 3*	*Total*
Interviews				**79 interviews**
Leadership Team				
CEO	✓	✓	✓	8
Communications Director	✓	✓	✓	7
Sustainability Director		✓		1
Chief Technology Officer		✓		4
Staff				
Co-Founder/Product Strategist		✓	✓	5
Logistics Manager			✓	1
Social Responsibility Managers (3)		✓	✓	9
Customer Service staff (8)		✓	✓	11
Community Manager		✓		4
Other staff members (5)		✓	✓	8
Interns (8)		✓	✓	9
Fairphone Associates				
Co-Founder/Non-Executive Director		✓		1
Ex-Marketing/Communications Manager		✓		1
Ex-Program Manager		✓		2
Ex-Campaign Team Members, NGO (2)		✓		2
Program Manager, NGO			✓	1
Program Advisors, NGO (2)		✓	✓	2
Majority Investor, Fairphone		✓	✓	2
Minority Investor, Fairphone			✓	1
Observations (field visits)			**130 days**	
Company-wide meetings (Fairphone office)		✓	✓	39
Company-wide 'Culture day' (outside Fairphone office)			✓	1
Leadership/operational meetings (Fairphone office)		✓	✓	7
Leadership/strategy meetings (outside Fairphone office)		✓	✓	3
Team meetings (Fairphone office)		✓	✓	35
Review sessions leadership team	✓	✓		2
One-on-one debrief sessions	✓	✓	✓	4
Archival documents				**239 documents**
Fairphone-generated videos	✓	✓		6

Table I. *Continued*

	Phase 1	*Phase 2*	*Phase 3*	*Total*
Grant Proposal and Evaluation Reports	✓			3
Operational internal reports		✓		5
Impact Map and Guide		✓	✓	3
Strategic Plans			✓	1
Media coverage (89 documents)	✓	✓	✓	89
Facebook posts and tweets (132 pages)	✓	✓	✓	132

In April 2014, during the presentation of the survey results, the different researchers met for the first time in Fairphone's office and discussed their research projects. Although they were now aware of each other's involvement in Fairphone, at this stage the two research teams continued their investigations separately. In both projects, however, it became increasingly clear that the initial guiding questions no longer captured the development of the new social enterprise. Rather, Fairphone's members seemed to be struggling with the formation of the organization's hybrid identity and questions surfaced about the position of the leadership in this process. As a result, while still separate, both projects started to revolve around similar questions and ultimately developed an overlapping research focus.

When the researchers reconnected in 2015, the authors realized that their projects had both evolved along similar lines; zooming in on questions about Fairphone's hybrid identity and on the role that leaders played in guiding that hybrid identity formation process. Both projects had also employed a similar inductive theory building approach (Murphy et al., 2017). Subsequently, and akin to research collaborations described elsewhere (Bechky and Okhuysen, 2011; Ravasi and Schultz, 2006), the authors began exchanging ideas on the case. After several rounds of discussion, we finally chose as an author group to merge the two data sets.

Following the merger of the two databases, we decided to treat all data as equally important so as to ensure a balanced reading between internal and external accounts of Fairphone's identity. This made particular sense as we realized that the two projects enabled us to both corroborate our separate findings and interpretations, and to cover complementary dimensions of the case, thereby enhancing our overall understanding of the case. For instance, the ethnographic data provided a detailed account of leadership team discussions about what Fairphone was about as an enterprise and where it should go in the future. The external communication data turned out to supplement these insights with a deeper understanding on how Fairphone translated these internal discussions into their online communication about itself.

Sharing all the data that we had collected between ourselves, each member of the team then familiarized her/himself with the full dataset before we jointly conducted the analysis. At this point, a fourth author with extensive experience in doing qualitative research was brought on board to help with the analysis. This four-member author team started

Table II. The organizational identities of Fairphone

	Phase 1: Hybrid movement-led identity ('social movement')	*Phase 2: Hybrid enterprise-led identity ('social start-up')*	*Phase 3: Hybrid compound identity ('Campaigning enterprise')*
Definition of organizational identity	Fairphone as a social movement that triggers political activism and public debate on social and environmental issues related to the production and consumption of smartphones	Fairphone as a commercial, high tech enterprise that designs, manufactures and markets a socially beneficial, technologically functional and compatible smartphone	Fairphone as an enterprise-led campaign or campaigning enterprise, fusing political and ethical principles of progress and debate into the production, marketing and distribution of a symbolic artifact for consumption
Product	Fairphone as discursive storytelling object	Fairphone as a material branded product	Fairphone as a symbol of political consumption
Product identity	Issue-led; creation and dissemination of campaign stories leading to political awareness and change	Product-led; manufacturing and marketing of a high-tech product, analogous to competing smartphone brands	Symbol-led; creation of product-related content supporting political action on environmental, social and technological causes through the phone
Mission statement	Create public awareness of issues and mobilize political support and political activism	Produce and market a sustainable and socially fair phone, leading to a viable enterprise with a societal benefit	Produce and market a product whereby the purchase of the product becomes a conscious political act, leading individuals to question how they consume products and take action
Societal impact	Indirect: in instigating political action that may lead to changes in the smartphone market, as a key consumption category	Direct: by selling a phone, stakeholders (including consumers, suppliers and workers, but also imagined future generations) will benefit in a material sense (e.g., less waste)	Direct and indirect: by buying a phone, consumers become politically active and may reflect and join the Fairphone movement or self-organize with others to address consumption patterns in other industries and markets
Key stakeholders	Primary stakeholder: Politically motivated citizens	Primary stakeholder: Customers	Primary stakeholder: Consumer activists
	Secondary stakeholders: media, corporations (as endorsers or antagonists), opinion leaders, NGOs, media	Secondary stakeholders: media, technology corporations and high tech ventures (as competitors), opinion leaders, industry analysts, media	Secondary stakeholders: media, technology corporations and high tech ventures (as competitors and collaborators), opinion leaders, industry analysts, NGOs, media
Primary period	2010–12 (initial campaign) and January–July 2013	July 2013–June 2014	July 2014–March 2015

to discuss their readings of the case and any differences in interpretations between them. Given the particular way in which the research team had come into existence, all members of the author team were especially careful to engage with the data and each other's interpretations reflectively and reflexively. Where needed, we revisited observations and experiences, and compared them with insights (written or narrated) from the other study, until we were positive about our collective analytical conclusions. In all, combining data on the same case and covering the same time period allowed us to compare theoretically informed observations across a more extensive set of data sources, which in the process enhances the reliability and validity of our overall findings (Murphy et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

Following established guidelines for grounded theory building in management research (Gioia et al., 2013; Langley, 1999), we cycled back and forth between the data, specific analyses, and existing literature to generate novel theoretical distinctions and insights. Although we recognize that a fully inductive approach – seeing the data from a so-called 'tabula rasa' perspective (Murphy et al., 2017) – is difficult to achieve, we did not involve the literature until we were fully engaged in our data analysis. That is, contrary to more recent versions of grounded theory that advocate a quicker involvement with theoretical concepts to inform and adapt the data collection (Murphy et al., 2017), our analysis followed a more traditional, emergent route (Gioia et al., 2013). Although the data analysis was an iterative process, we delineate here the key analytical stages in sequence.

Writing a narrative account. Drawing on our entire dataset and following established protocols for qualitative analysis (Langley, 1999), the first step in our analysis was to develop a rich case narrative that integrated the various data sources. This exercise was essential in consolidating two projects into one, offering an integrated base for our subsequent data analysis. The narrative description included a timeline of events, a list of the main actors within Fairphone, and a sequence of decisions and actions. This narrative, which was written as a thick description of how events unfolded chronologically (Langley, 1999), sensitized us to the importance of questions of organizational identity, mission and the object of the fair smartphone in the early stages of Fairphone's development. Fairphone's founders, leaders and the company's employees appeared to be constantly reflecting on 'who they were' and 'what they did' in light of an evolving sense of Fairphone's overall purpose and mission. These observations led us to draw on literatures on organizational identity and objects in our subsequent analysis of the data.

Temporal bracketing. Building on our insights from the narrative, and realizing that the identity formation process occurred over different time periods, we adopted a 'temporal bracketing' technique (Langley, 1999). We initially split the observed timeline into three distinct entrepreneurial phases: 'launch', 'commercialization', and the 'early growth of the social enterprise' (see Table II). The launch phase included the formal start of the enterprise and initial discussions about the organization's identity and mission (January – July 2013). The subsequent commercialization period (July 2013 – June 2014) involved Fairphone sourcing, developing and marketing the first fair smartphone. This phase

coincided with a redefinition of the organization's identity and product. Finally, in the early growth stage (July 2014 – April 2015) we observed how the organization's members settled on a collective labelling of the organization's identity and had in doing so found a coherent strategy of how, consistent with a dual mission, it is aiming to make broad societal change through its customers.

Temporal bracketing was primarily based on our first-hand observations of changes in the social enterprise and on how our informants defined the organization's identity over time. We, however, checked this bracketing against the Twitter data[1] and found that Fairphone's public communication corresponded with the three periods of the organization's history and identity that we had delineated.

Initial coding. We subsequently coded the qualitative data (interview transcripts, field notes and archival documents) for actions and decisions related to organizational identity across the three periods. In developing the first order codes, we initially focused on 'informant-centric terms' (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 18) which captured important ways in which informants made sense of Fairphone's identity. These examples included descriptions of themselves as being 'strategically naïve' in one period or 'business savvy' in the next, and of their product as being primarily about 'storytelling' in one period and about 'product and brand building' in the next.

As an author team we initially coded separately and then brought our readings of the qualitative data together to compare our interpretations. While generally the author team agreed on the direction of the analysis towards codes that reflected the development of Fairphone's hybrid identity, at times multiple discussions were needed to come to a common understanding of the data. For example, two members of the author team had initially focused primarily on the role of founders, but collective discussions between the authors resulted in the unanimous conclusion that the focus instead should be on the formative role of leaders as well as founders in the hybrid identity formation process.

We iterated among first order codes within and across the periods and drew on relevant literature in order to move from the informant-centric first-order codes to second-order conceptual categories that reflected 'researcher-centric concepts, themes and dimensions' (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 18). In doing so, we identified common themes. Where relevant, we drew on themes and concepts from the organizational identity literature to label our conceptual categories and to identify novel themes and concepts (Murphy et al., 2017). For example, we drew in the themes of 'articulating a vision' and 'converging on a consensual identity' (Gioia et al., 2000) to describe the initial labelling of Fairphone and how after various changes to the labels and meanings across the three periods a joint definition of 'who they are' became established. We then identified distinctive themes, such as the themes that emerged around the role of the object of the smartphone as a product or idea around which activities – 'what we do' (Ravasi and Phillips, 2011) – were given shape. Following the suggestions of Murphy et al. (2017), we therefore mobilized the literature on objects (Nicolini et al., 2012; Zuzul, 2018)[2] to code and categorize how definitions and interpretations of the fair smartphone evolved against the backdrop of the growing enterprise and in line with the leaders and members' changing definitions of 'who they are'. We observed in our data how the object of the smart phone was 'configured' differently over time; it moved from being a discursive storytelling object to a

physical branded product with a social purpose, and, finally, to a political object that is used as a lever for mission-driven societal change.

We discussed these and other emergent themes between us, supported by tables and data records within the author team (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and resolved any discrepancies between us through mutual agreement (Murphy et al., 2017). Thereafter, we merged these initial conceptual distinctions into more general conceptual themes – a procedure Locke (2001, pp. 47–50) labels as 'comparing' – in order to gradually move from raw, first order statements to more general conceptual themes (see also Murphy et al., 2017).

Developing conceptual categories and an integrated model. In this final stage of our analysis, we focused on how the conceptual themes we had identified could be linked into an integrated process model that offered a robust explanation of the case (Murphy et al., 2017). At this stage, we continued to engage both the data and the mobilized literature to understand not only how themes were related but also why. Furthermore, the temporal bracketing of the case into the three phases allowed us to track noticeable differences over time, to identify the transition points and theorize about the processual constructs that cut across the different phases. In this way, we believe we identified a set of processes that theoretically explain the formation of a hybrid organizational identity in a social enterprise. As part of our abductive process (Murphy et al., 2017), we considered various angles and explanations related to organizational identity and organizational identity formation (including theoretical views stressing the role of external images on members' identity construals (see Battilana et al., 2017)). This process led us to focus on the lens of organizational identity work (Kreiner et al., 2015) to hone in on a theorization that best explains the findings and uncovers a number of constituent processes in the formation of a hybrid organizational identity. Figure 1 shows the first-order codes, second order themes and the aggregate dimensions in the model (see Tracey and Phillips, 2016).

After we agreed on the emerging model, we conducted 'member checks' (Murphy et al., 2017) with Fairphone's leaders to assess the credibility of our findings. We presented them with draft versions of the model and of the narrative to check whether our interpretations and conclusions adequately represented their experiences and views. Their positive feedback reinforced our confidence in the credibility of our theoretical interpretations.

FINDINGS

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the data from specific, first-order statements used by informants to more general, second-order themes. Table III presents representative quotations that substantiate the second-order themes we identified. The first two aggregate dimensions, 'creating a character for the organization' and 'enacting models of social change', occurred across the three phases of the identity formation process that we identified. We consider these processes within the founder and leadership teams and subsequently across the organization as important ways through which the organizational

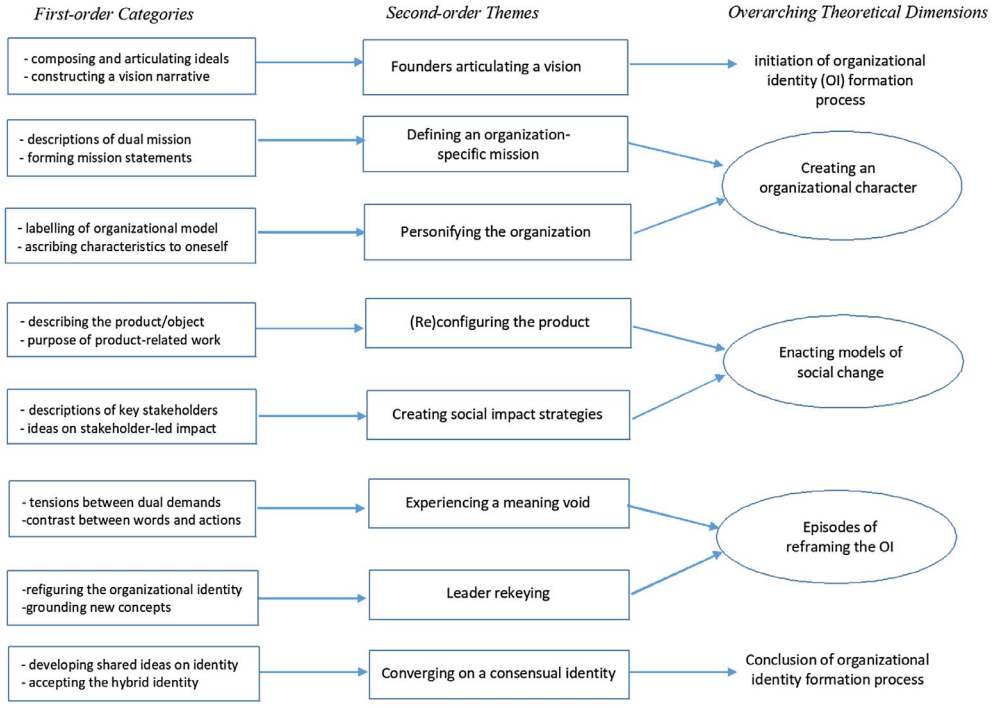

Figure 1. Data structure

identity is formed (Kreiner et al., 2015); that is, of the members of Fairphone collectively figuring out who they are as a hybrid organization and how they anchor this in their product and in the social impact they aimed to achieve with their stakeholders. We observed how both dimensions also combined to foster patterned and repetitive cycles of collective sensemaking around joint definitions of 'who we are' (that is, our character) and 'what we do' (that is, how we aim to make positive change).

At the same time, however, a second set of themes, 'experiencing a meaning void' and 'leader rekeying', capture how over time certain claims regarding what the organization is and could be became constricted to members of the organization, falling short of the hybrid ideals and asking the leaders to step in and reframe, or 'rekey', existing singular definitions into more hybrid alternatives. These themes ('experiencing a meaning void' and 'leader rekeying') were also recurrent and associated with two of the sequential stages of forming a hybrid identity.

We finally observed how once the leadership team successfully managed to 'rekey' the previously singular identities into a hybrid image, the whole organization started to align itself around the new hybrid identity (i.e., the theme of 'converging on a consensual identity' in Figure 1). Together, these recurrent and sequential themes led to the development of the grounded theory and to the formulation of our overall model (Figure 2), articulated after the findings narrative.

Table III. Additional supporting data for second-order themes

Theme	*Phase*	*Illustrative Data (first order quotes)*
Founders articulating a vision	Phase 1	'Fairphone is a way to deconstruct the capitalist system on the loose, to start a discussion'. (CEO, interview Vrij Nederland)
		'A mobile phone is part of a complex economic and political system; which we naively try to address and deconstruct. As consumers we have become alienated from the products that we use. With the phone we want to tell that story'. (CEO, interview Volkskrant)
Defining an organization-specific mission	Phase 1	'What we're trying to do is create a smartphone that uses the best practices of today to spark a change in the industry. And by industry we don't only mean the manufacturers or the brands but also the consumers as well; to be more responsible and more critical about their stuff, to create a connection with their products not just the brands. And provide visibility to the issues – good or bad – that go around the phone ecosystem'. (Marketing/Communications Manager)
		'We can't put a figure on how "fair" Fairphone is, but it will evolve. I'm not in this to make phones. I'm here to challenge the systems behind the product'. (CEO)
	Phase 2	'…you still need to be making a very good product. And you shouldn't say that you would rather not make them. It is your core focus; it is your core mission right now'. (CTO)
		'We need to sell phones not just to get implicated in the value chain and the supply chain. It's also because you need to run a business and make money. To be sustainable, you need to have a sustainable business, which is products. You need to make money'. (CTO)
		'People don't realize that. We're extremely late. We're going to end up a long time without a product on the market and no cash coming in. Cash is king…No cash, no projects, no Ghana recycling stuff, no workers' welfare fund stuff, no nothing'. (CTO)
	Phase 3	'If you really become a company of 200,000 [phones], which means that in terms of turnover and the number of people, that you really exist in the world then you have something to say when you talk about social impact'. (Majority investor)
		'…we want to go through customers [in order to change the system]. We don't want to be a brand certification organization. So it helped us to define our target groups and to formulate the kinds of response we wanted'. (CEO)
		'Because in the end…the focus is not to sell but it is kind of to create broad-based awareness about we are making a phone and while you are here, look at all the other things we are doing as a business'. (Communication director)

Table III. *Continued*

Theme	*Phase*	*Illustrative Data (first order quotes)*
Personifying the organization	Phase 1	'Because you're working on something tangible – a phone or a part of a phone – so they could smell, so to say, the communication value here in the Netherlands. You know, if that would be successful, you have something really in your hands that tells … It's just this great story. And NGOs in general need great stories'. (Program Advisor, NGO)
		'It was still a campaign. We did not have a phone, [but] we wanted to make a phone…So it started as a campaign within the commercial enterprise'. (Communication director)
	Phase 2	'But we changed who we are … it [being an industry insider] is more effective and then we can talk with them [the consumer electronics industry]. [I said, to the CEO] don't use them as being our enemy – which was a change because in the beginning their thought was, "[Down with] capitalist Apple!" And now we said, "that's not the point. If we have our own [market] position, we will be accepted by them as a sort of indirect game"'. (Majority investor)
		'We consciously decided that if we became a label [certification company], then we would be looking at the sector from the outside in; we would be looking at where it could be better and telling what could be improved. But we would lose sight of the fact that if we enter the sector and become a telephone company, then you can change the sector from the inside'. (CEO)
	Phase 3	'Well, if you look at it, it [Fairphone] is neither pure business nor pure NGO … It is a complete mix of both, which makes it very difficult on both sides actually. Because on the business side, you have to think about the other side and on the other side you have to think about the business side … '. (CTO)
		'I like to think that I am in the middle; because I think both are very important. To me it's clear what the starting point was. It's clear that to get to that vision the tool that we have chosen is to actually produce a phone. So I see everything in the same framework. About who we are, you know'. (Co-Founder/Product Strategist)
Configuring the product	Phase 1	'We are not selling a Fair phone, we are selling a fair supply chain. A fair supply chain is something that needs to be continually looked after and improved and monitored and you can't do that without always communicating your steps'. (Community Manager)

Table III. *Continued*

Theme	*Phase*	*Illustrative Data (first order quotes)*
		'And where I was really interested in telling this story about the stuff that is in the phone, and the people who are working in the mines, I noticed that the CEO was also interested in that, but also really interested in this supply chain story, breaking up this supply chain, telling the story more from the technical point of view'. (Co-Founder/ Non-Executive Director)
	Phase 2	'…we are drawn into communicating whatever happens within the company even though we would like to do more storytelling about the interventions and the [social] projects. We have been pushed into communicating about the product and the company and how we are growing'. (Communications Director)
		'…then when you make the physical product people expect the product to be on time; that's how consumerism works and we have to meet those expectations and become a phone company that answers questions in a reasonable time. That's something we are working on now…'. (Community Manager)
	Phase 3	'Our main activity [now] is about increasing the responsibility of users and producers. Because we now see it as our responsibility so others might start seeing it as their responsibility. [If that works] then you have the direct tie'. (Social Responsibility Manager #1)
		'So the phone becomes a political object for a lot of people who want to change the situation'. (CEO)
Creating social impact strategies	Phase 1	'There are all these topics that…it is really interesting to see how complex it [the supply chain around a smartphone] is…We are educating the community and letting them in on the process. I think that is our goal'. (Community Manager)
		'rather than do petitions,…we can make a platform in which we create the wisdom of the crowds to be able to think about how to solve these problems'. (CEO)
	Phase 2	'Our fore focus right now is on the product and on the customers who have bought a phone'. (CTO)
		'Whereas the community from the beginning was always the first thing; the community were our carrier – they carried us. Now, sometimes I feel that it [the community] is an afterthought [as we only focus on consumers]'. (Communication Director)
	Phase 3	'…we are a [change] platform that attracts people and I think everyone has come on board in this…internally we are getting behind being a company that is trying to create impact through the production of a phone'. (Communication Director)

Table III. *Continued*

Theme	*Phase*	*Illustrative Data (first order quotes)*
		'The only responsibility we have it [is] the purest responsibility; that is towards our customers, who can change the industry [as consumer activists]. We can't. We will never change the industry ourselves. The customers will'. (CEO)
Experiencing a meaning void	Phase 1	'We say we are making a phone to change the system, but in the long run you cannot tell that to your consumers. I would not buy a product from somebody who says, "We'd rather not make the products. I'd rather change the industry than make the product". It is a bit like Tesla saying, "we don't really want to build electric cars. We just want all the cars to the electric. We will build one, but we would rather not build the cars because the cars are just the means to an end"'. (CTO)
		'I had a feeling that we work in a media company. It is communication. It is producing documents, websites… [But] that is not it. If you do not have this that works [points to a smartphone] then you are [Fairphone is] done. Forget it. Done!'. (CTO)
	Phase 2	'…lately, because we released a phone and we get all these technical [people] and because I think people like technology…they want to know what's going to be new about it and we shouldn't be pulled into that so much…And that's something new with us…that we're a product company; that [being a phone company] we have to be comfortable with'. (Community Manager)
		'It [Fairphone] has become so much more of an operational thing. 25,000 customers who are going, "Can I have this?" Can I have that?' is something that grabs your attention first and will always have a direct consequence on your operation. Whereas if you are trying to create a long-term relationship and create social impact, you want to take your time to measure [impact], but those screaming customers are going to move your head to answer them first and take away from the [social] mission'. (Communication Director)
Leader re-keying	Refiguring	'I keep on reviewing our mission statement and I realize that we are still in transition in many ways. We have gone from campaign to NGO to social enterprise and now we are a product company. What are we trying to do [and what should we become]?'. (CEO)
		'And I think that that change of focus is, for me it's completely right to redefine ourselves in this way but I don't think we should have done that in the beginning…'. (Co-Founder/Product Strategist)

Table III. *Continued*

Theme	*Phase*	*Illustrative Data (first order quotes)*
	Regrounding	'Now it's a natural step that we move towards, you know: "This is our story, this is what we do, and by the way, you can buy our product to support us"'. (Co-Founder/Product Strategist)
		'…I think there are two effects, but they are so closely related… the strange thing is people call it "business with a heart" or "NGO with a brain" or whatever. You [Fairphone] are uniting worlds that are already in existence. So it's maybe not strange, but we are giving it a new twist'. (Communication Director)
Converging on a consensual identity	Phase 3	'I totally feel like we have [become] a hybrid organization in that sense. For me, I'd say that there is a social and a for-profit, the social and the commercial.'. (CEO)
		'It is very important that we [now] get common ground as we are really becoming a hybrid company and that means that we need to have a structured way of working together as we need to find a way to scale and grow the organization as a business. We cannot have a phone – especially not in two years – if we don't have a story … So a story without a phone is nothing, a phone without a story in this case is nothing, and it's balancing between those two'. (Majority investor)
		'there is now not just a common vision, but we also agree on what the products stands for and does'. (intern)

Phase 1: Conceptualizing a Social Movement-based Identity at Launch (July 2012 – July 2013)

Fairphone's founding team consisted of six members who had no prior experience in the telecommunications industry. However, they did share the same social networks and a similar set of values about social change and sustainability. The Community Manager explained, 'We are in the same circle of either artists or creative people, like minded, sustainable minded friends'. All six founding members shared the broad conviction that business in general should not just be about 'designing products just for the sake of making money' but should be geared towards a 'net positive impact' (Co-founder/Product strategist). In line with these shared beliefs and personal ties, the founding team laid down an overall vision for the enterprise, which they subsequently extended into more specific conceptions of their mission, the organization, their product and the stakeholders they were thinking of working with to create social impact.

Founders articulating a vision. Together, the founding members articulated an overall vision of wanting to systematically change consumer behaviour such that consumers actively make informed choices about consuming more responsible products, become politically involved, and mobilize others to do the same. The production of a 'fair' phone was a

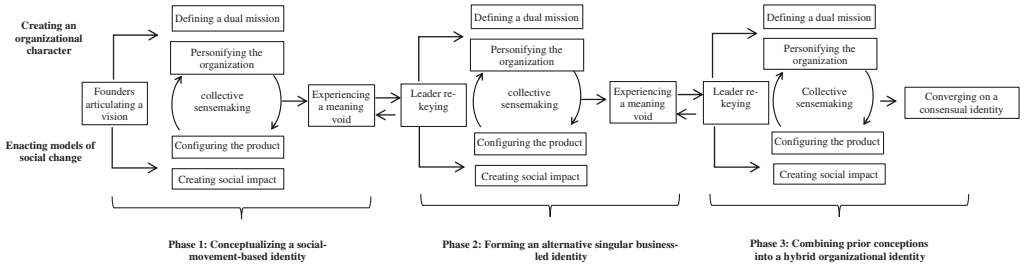

Figure 2. A grounded theoretical model of hybrid organizational identity formation

means towards this ultimate aspiration. A smartphone, as a product, was chosen as it is a ubiquitous product and offered a way of unfolding the complexity of supply chain and consumption issues that are common across many contemporary markets. The founding team at this point went through several strategy sessions after which they established a mission statement to focus attention on this ultimate aspiration of creating change through greater 'awareness' amongst general consumers.

Defining an organization-specific mission. In order to make headway towards this particular aspiration, the team realized that the initial €400,000 angel investment was not sufficient to finance the design and production of an actual smartphone; specifically, the funds did not enable them enrol a sufficiently large group of people into a movement to realize their vision. In response, the team decided to appeal to the public in a crowdfunding campaign. Their goal was to raise enough funds to cover the production of 25,000 smartphones at a unit price of €325. The campaign was a success: all smartphones were pre-ordered by November 2013, generating substantial media coverage for Fairphone in the process.

Whilst the crowdfunding campaign enabled Fairphone to raise the required capital, it reinforced the founders' collective belief in a mission where Fairphone was an ongoing campaign aimed at fostering a social movement of informed consumers and of those interested in campaigning on the issues involved in the production of a smartphone. The Community Manager recalled that this founding period was about '…this project idea. I don't think we were even comfortable calling ourselves a company then'. Similarly, the Communication Director stressed that 'it made sense to start with communication. It was still a campaign. We did not have a phone, [but] we wanted to make a phone…So it started as a campaign within the commercial enterprise'. The team had extended the earlier 'proto' identity of Fairphone as a public awareness campaign to that of the nascent social enterprise.

Personifying the organization. In line with the articulated mission, the founding members collectively brainstormed about how to best characterize the nascent organization. We observed how they 'typecast' themselves, iterating between descriptions and labels such as 'activist group', 'NGO', 'social movement', and 'social enterprise', and essentially combined beliefs about themselves with what they considered a viable organizational model for the social enterprise. In the first phase, the founding members characterized the organization as a 'social movement'; as an outside challenger to incumbent companies in the consumer electronics industry, promoting the reform of established practices in the industry's supply chain. This outsider and challenger self-definition went

hand in glove with promoting a self-proclaimed attitude of 'strategic naivety' – the idea that being unknowledgeable but critical about the industry was a positive quality. The phrase had been coined during the campaign phase and quickly took hold as an apt label rationalizing their limited business experience:

> 'And about being strategically naïve, we thought, "This is so complicated, that we better be naïve, we better just ask questions". When we don't know something, we just ask questions'. (Co-Founder/Product Strategist)

Configuring the product. Consistent with this social movement-led definition of 'who they are', the founding members defined and positioned the object of the 'fair' phone as a discursive storytelling object. Rather than focusing on the phone as a technological product, they conceptualized it as a storytelling object to anchor Fairphone's ideals (vision) and enable issues-led campaigning around the actual production of a phone.

> 'Who's responsible [for the situation in Congo]? Where do you start if you want to change this? With Fairphone it's basically what it says…it will be the first fair phone … By making this phone we have to take the phone as a starting point to open up all the systems around it. And the phone in a way becomes a storytelling artifact. It makes us understand what actions are needed to change the system. In a way it's kind of the same as saying we have to create world peace but there is no fun in that. So the phone makes it more tangible, it makes it smaller [more concrete] to be able to grasp it for people'. (CEO)

The Communication Director and Community Manager coined the phrase 'buy a phone, start a movement'. At this stage, in the absence of an actual phone, the entire founding team considered 'the message as the main product'. The team focused as a result on generating extensive storytelling around the issues involved in the production of a fair and sustainable phone. Other issues (waste and recycling, fair labour practices in the supply chain, and open design) were added to the initial issue of conflict minerals, and stories were seeded and discussions initiated with their online follower community.

Creating social impact strategies. The overall aim of the founding team was to communicate about issues in a transparent way to their online community which they considered as the primary stakeholder at this point, consistent with the attempts of a social movement that aims to reveal hidden practices and mobilize a community to create positive change. 'We are not even talking about fairness; we are talking about transparency. Because at this moment, a lot of the stuff we do is small steps. The least we can do is doing it [sic] in the most transparent way; being honest about the business' (CEO).

The founders considered this online community, which also consisted of future customers (who had prepaid for a phone), as a social movement of politically involved citizens who care about these fundamental supply chain issues and who, as an open and informed crowd, can be tapped for their expertise – creating in effect a community-led process of social change. This particular idea of community engagement was in fact a remnant of the campaign that had been run before Fairphone was incorporated, where

rather than 'do petitions,…we can make a platform in which we create the wisdom of the crowds to be able to think about how to solve these problems' (CEO).

Experiencing a meaning void. Initially, the founding members managed to create coherence between their mission, the character of the organization, their product and the stakeholders they were serving and working with to create social impact (see Anthony and Tripsas, 2016). Yet, as the enterprise developed, and as the balance shifted from crowdfunding campaigns towards operational challenges around producing an actual phone, the founding members start to experience a disconnect between the work that they were doing and the initial labelling of their identity. For example, one of the Co-Founders mentioned how Fairphone was moving from 'having money assigned to a project' to 'selling a product', where the latter is seen as much more promising as a campaign is 'not a sustainable thing in a way that it can [be] sustain[ed] by itself'. The Communication Director similarly reflected on how 'the company was moving from a kind of virtual product into a real product company'. For some of them, the experienced contrast between the original identity definition that they had laid down and their daily work triggered a real identity crisis. The Community Manager described how, at the time, the 'hardest thing' was that 'we had been such an [awareness campaign] project for so long, we didn't think "whoa, we are selling a real product"'. Instead, he says, 'Maybe it is a fundamental identity issue. We don't know who we are and what we are'.

Leader rekeying. Faced with this ambiguity between the initially agreed definition of 'who they are' and who they were becoming, the leadership of the organization is faced with an acute challenge. At this point, a chief technology officer (CTO) with smartphone industry experience is hired into the newly formed leadership team. This leadership team subsumes the executive power in the organization and away from the group of founding members of whom only two – the CEO and Communication Director – remain in the leadership team. In one of the early leadership team meetings (in July 2013), we observed how the ambiguity about who they are pulled leaders in different directions and pushed them to experiment with alternative labels and ideas. The CTO stepped up in this and subsequent meetings and as the 'fresh voice from outside' set out to convince others in the team to change the framing of their identity towards that of a credible and professionally run phone-company that produces a socially responsible branded product.

> 'The message that I hear often is that others are saying the phone is a means to an end. Well, yes and no. You need to be making a very good product [right now]; the company should be making a very good phone [as the main aim]'. (CTO)

Phase 2: Forming an Alternative Business-Led Identity (July 2013 – June 2014)

This alternative framing was reluctantly accepted by other members of the leadership team. We witnessed the CTO's 're-keying' of the original vision, which involved re-figuring specific elements of the original identity framing as well as reordering means

and ends such that Fairphone as a material product took centre stage at the expense of 'story-led campaigning'.

Defining an organization-specific mission. The material product became a metonym for the social enterprise, defining the enterprise's mission. Within the leadership team, this singular emphasis on the product was promoted by the CTO who argued that '… making a very good product should be the core focus. It is your [Fairphone's] core mission right now'. The CTO and the leadership team started to advocate this business-focused mission. As this mission chimed with the bulk of the work that the organization was involved in at this stage (with far lesser attention being devoted to social impact stories and interventions than before), it quickly gained a footing with a large majority of members of the organization.

Personifying the organization. Instead of being an industry-challenging, reform-oriented outsider, the leadership team started to reconceive what kind of organization they were. They now considered the organization as an inside change agent; as a socially responsible 'phone company' that engaged with industry to change the system from within. This counter-image was based on the view that the enterprise was making a product (a phone) that had to be based on a sustainable social enterprise model.

> '[A]s an NGO or project in a foundation - like we were - you cannot get to certain places. You cannot sit on a business table with a supplier … The position is very different if you are actually a business. And that is why we decided to go this way, to social entrepreneurship'. (Co-Founder/Product Strategist)

In the same vein, the leadership team revised the promotion of strategic naivety as a company ethos. Instead, they argued, that the opposite – namely, business credibility – now had to be built up and demonstrated towards customers since 'Strategic naivety, where you can start to go questioning everything is not necessarily the best thing to do because if you do not understand how things work it is difficult to change them'. (CTO) This affirmation of business credibility went hand in hand with the recruitment of marketing and customer support staff who readily embraced the newly articulated characterization.

Configuring the product. With a change in focus towards the material product, we observed how the heavy emphasis on storytelling as an end in itself changed into more product- and brand-led storytelling. The product itself transitioned from a discursive storytelling object into a material, functioning branded product, with messaging in turn being used to support the promotion and marketing of the product. The Communication Director, making sense of the change, said: 'I noticed a couple of months ago that I was changing from a campaign that is trying to uncover the complexities of the supply chain to at the same time I am creating a product and for a product, your brand is important because you want people to trust what you are doing'.

Creating social impact strategies. This change also affected the balance of attention within Fairphone which shifted from communicating with an online community of followers towards servicing customers, who had purchased the phone.

> 'Whereas the community from the beginning was always the first thing; the community were our carrier – they carried us. Now, sometimes I feel that it [the community] is an afterthought'. (Communication Director)

The sale of the phone to customers became part of a social enterprise model (Alter, 2007) with the proceeds being used to finance social intervention programs aimed at 'beneficiaries', such as the miners in Congo and workers in the Chinese factory where the phone was assembled. Furthermore, the shift in emphasis to product-led communication with customers that this brought led community and customer support staff within Fairphone to realize that they could no longer report publicly everything they did or encountered in the supply chain – as they had done as a social movement campaign – without jeopardizing the company's credibility with their customers. Consequently, communication about the product towards customers became less transparent and more guarded: 'We want to be open and transparent, but also people might doubt our credibility or the quality of our products if we are too honest about things. That [openness] was the balance then and this [caution] is the balance now' (Community Manager).

Experiencing a meaning void. In the day-to-day experiences of the new leadership team and of the newly enrolled members of the organization, Fairphone moved from a social movement-based 'campaign' to a 'company'; from a 'hypothetical' into a 'real' product. Initially many employees were supportive of the reframing; it helped them to square their day-to-day operational activities with a more specific definition of who they were as a social enterprise. This alignment created a situation where leaders and staff confirmed their sense of who they were as an enterprise (Figure 2), but in time it also came to limit their understanding of Fairphone to that of a 'real' business with a singular mission. Some of the founding members – most notably the Community Manager and the Communication Director – struggled to reconcile the incessant business focus with the original social impact agenda of the enterprise. The Communication Director felt that Fairphone's priority had shifted too much to pursuing operational and commercial goals, thereby jeopardizing its original social mission. She experienced the acute dilemma that the company now found itself in:

> '…now that you have a product and you still want to deliver a mission. How can you set the balance straight that people still believe that you are an intervention company and still like your product, but also they keep on buying your product to support that intervention? Now already there is that tug of war between the two. The bigger you get the harder it is to keep everyone in that balance'. (Communication Director)

The Communication Director was seen by many employees as the 'conscience' within the organization, and we observed how, following her lead, others across the enterprise

were also starting to experience and voice a disconnect between the predominant business focus of the enterprise and its initial aspirations around social impact.

Leader rekeying. Faced with this meaning void in the organization, there is again a need for the leadership team to recalibrate and reframe the identity of Fairphone. Within the leadership team itself, the CTO and Communication Director come to represent the different sides to Fairphone's dual identity and continued to advocate alternative identity definitions. Realizing the limitations of the previous identity definitions, Fairphone's CEO took charge in this final phase and engaged in extensive sense giving towards the leadership team and towards his employees. He used the contradictions that existed between the prior identity labels and meanings as an opportunity for an innovative re-keying.

The CEO refigured and combined these prior framings into an integrated vision of a 'campaigning enterprise' (see Table II); a view where through its customers Fairphone would foster political action and create a groundswell movement of 'consumer activists' who will change the smartphone industry from within. The CEO positioned this vision in between the 'business models' of social movements, NGOs and mainstream companies in the industry on the one hand and between the worlds of political activism and market consumption on the other hand.

Phase 3: Combining Prior Conceptions into A Hybrid Organizational Identity (July 2014 – March 2015)

The CEO developed a blueprint for Fairphone's new organizational identity by systematically reframing and incorporating aspects of its prior social movement and product-led identities into a novel compound framing of Fairphone as a 'campaigning enterprise'.

Defining an organization-specific mission. Using the input from a series of strategy meetings and brainstorm sessions on their social impact agenda, the CEO realized that Fairphone's social impact would not be based on selling a branded product to a niche customer base, but would result from a better understanding of the product for politically involved consumers and from the actual social impact that Fairphone could then make. The CEO wanted the company to:

> '…go through customers [in order to change the system]. We don't want to be a brand certification organization. He [the CEO] himself confessed this, but I think it [the social impact session] pushed him towards thinking about what the strategy was from a company level and how to go forward'. (Communication Director)

The mission accordingly became defined in a more 'dual' and 'integrated' manner around how through its customers Fairphone could offer a market-based solution that would trigger a groundswell of political activism that would in turn lead to social impact and change.

Personifying the organization. The CEO re-figured and re-grounded elements from the prior organizational identity framings. Specifically, he reiterated the attitude of strategic naivety from the social movement frame and that of business acumen from the business frame and

brought them together to conceptualize a 'thought leadership' position for the enterprise as a 'campaigning enterprise'. In this view Fairphone would as a company use its acquired inside knowledge of the consumer electronics industry to ask the tough questions and support customers with its campaigns and intelligence in making the change. Where previously proceeds from the sales of the phone were used to finance production and social intervention programs (i.e., a service subsidization model), he envisaged a role for Fairphone as a broker or intermediary knowledge-based 'platform' or 'vehicle' for its customers (i.e., a market linkage model, see Alter, 2007), providing well-researched social and environmental information about the industry to support customers in becoming politically active and campaign as a market-based movement for change.

Configuring the product. The CEO re-conceptualized Fairphone's product as a symbolic object for fostering political change through its politically involved customers; thereby fusing previous conceptions of the object or product and of the market:

> 'So the phone becomes a political object for a lot of people who want to change the situation'. (CEO)

The product of a fair smartphone was thus re-keyed from being either a discursive storytelling object or a material, branded product into a combined, yet transformed, notion of a symbolic product for active political consumption (see Table II). In this view, buying the product is a conscious political act that recruits the customer into addressing the social issues in the industry and expects that customers use this knowledge to mobilize others towards industry reform.

Creating social impact strategies. In line with this reframing, the CEO advocated a more specific focus on 'consumer activists' as opposed to focusing in an undifferentiated manner on a market base or on an online community of followers. The leadership team coined the new slogan 'We are Fairphone' for its webpage and Twitter account to capture the new-found ethos of focusing on 'consumer activists', who, facilitated by the company, are considered the real market-based change agents.

> 'The only responsibility we have it [is] the purest responsibility; that is towards our customers, who can change the industry. We can't. We will never change the industry ourselves. The customers will'. (CEO)

In this strategy, the phone is meant to energize and commit customers towards becoming informed ('becoming a platform for change') and campaign for change in the industry. The social impact strategy in turn became one of positioning Fairphone as a market-based vehicle for consumer-led political action on responsible consumption.

Converging on a consensual identity. Towards the end of the third phase, leaders and members of the organization embraced this hybrid identity and formed consensus about the key identity attributes of their hybrid organization; accepting the dual or integrated mission, agreeing to the organizational model, and collectively believing in how they were creating

social impact through their product in the market. The 'tug of war' that had existed between the 'social' and 'business' camps was resolved and members agreed in their collective sensemaking on 'who they are' and 'what they do'.

> 'I felt we had a breakthrough a couple of weeks ago in terms of acceptance that we are not a phone company. That we are a company that is trying to create impact through making a phone…that we are a platform that attracts people and I think everyone has come on board in this…I feel like it has become more integrated…internally we are becoming more aligned with the fact that we are a company that is trying to create impact through the production of a phone'. (Communication Director)

The leadership team itself considered the new hybrid notion of its organization and product as the 'proof of concept' for their social enterprise model with a tangible product underscoring its model of political change.

> 'So what you see now is that people still have comments on the fact that we're not 100 per cent fair, …but it is much more mature, because you actually get a discussion on what fairness is instead of saying "bugger off with these people, they are just tree huggers and idealists, that they can never get where they want". Because we have a phone now, because we have a product. It makes it real and it also makes real consumers. … But the phone is out, people are just having it in their hands and they [our consumers] also have to defend themselves to the people who are asking them questions'. (CEO)

We furthermore found that members who had been with the company since its launch or commercialization oftentimes cast the integrated hybrid identity as the culmination of a journey of the organization struggling through different phases in order to develop its character. The Co-founder/Product Strategist, for example, remarked:

> 'And I think that that change of focus [towards a campaigning enterprise] is, for me… completely right, because…I don't want to say that we should have done that in the beginning. At the same time, I also know that we would have sold less…And maybe we wouldn't be who we are if we would have been less product-focused. So I think that it was a good decision in the beginning [to be less product-focused]…Now it's a natural step that we move towards, you know, "This is our story, this is what we do, and by the way, you can buy our product to support us"'.

We furthermore observed that subsequent cycles of sensemaking within the enterprise since 2015 have kept the hybrid character and dual mission of the enterprise in check and have fostered further development around Fairphone as a vehicle for consumer activism. Follow-up conversations with the leadership team since our study ended suggests that they have continued to refine Fairphone's identity as a 'campaigning enterprise' to sustain its hybrid character. For example, they have since 2015 realized that a sole focus on consumer activists who have bought the phone will ultimately be an insufficient growth model towards creating systemic impact. In response, they have started to develop an investment platform for 'change agents' who can donate and support

Fairphone's ambitions without having to buy the phone. In October 2018, Fairphone successfully raised €2.5 million in order to 'make a greater impact' (Fairphone, 2018). This community of 'change agents' (totalling 1,827 individuals) did not buy a phone, but in exchange received equity in the company. This further re-keying by the leadership team of Fairphone's key stakeholders and of ways to achieve impact is an iteration of the previously established hybrid frame of being a 'campaigning enterprise'; yet, it differs in ways that expand and adapt the enterprise's orientation towards supporting a broader group of market-based activists who can change the smartphone and consumer electronics industry.

The Role of Leader Re-Keying during Hybrid Organizational Identity formation

The process model of hybrid identity formation that we have outlined indicates the active identity work that the leaders of Fairphone had to do to help members of the organization revise their understanding of their organizational identity as it was formed within the social enterprise. Since its launch, the enterprise faced, like many other social enterprises, specific operational and business challenges as well as recurrent periods in which the members of the enterprise experienced meaning voids between their actions and the avowed hybrid ideals of the organization. These instances triggered in turn an active questioning and re-framing of the organizational identity among the leadership team, who realized that they had to avoid mission drift and regain the enterprise's original social impact agenda. This identity work (Brown, 2015) by the leaders of the enterprise involved them not so much reflecting on their own evolving identities as social entrepreneurs, but on how they thought about hybrid elements in the organization's identity and about continuity and change in those elements. In other words, they oriented themselves to fostering a process of collective 'identity work' at the organizational level (Brown, 2015; Kreiner et al., 2015) and how they could help others in the organization develop a coherent sense of the organization's hybridity.

The acts of reframing that the leaders engaged in helped, as we have shown, foster a process of character development (Selznick, 1949, 2008), with leaders and members of the organization experimenting with alternative identities, putting those into practice through the enterprise's product and social impact strategies, and learning about the possible hybrid character of the enterprise along the way. The leaders of Fairphone themselves also became more mindful of their trajectory as a social enterprise as part of this process and started to creatively recombine aspects of their dual mission into a novel hybrid identity frame. In this way, they were after a few iterations able to identify a sense of the 'distinctive unity and character' (Selznick, 2008, p. 59) of their organization and suggest this to the organization's members. This character formation process then concluded two years after the launch of the enterprise with the organization-wide consensus on a hybrid organizational identity. Thus, the formation of a hybrid organizational identity involves a process of identity work at the organizational level through which a hybrid identity is formed and emerges, rather than it being an extension of a founder's vision or simply a case of construing meanings and enacting practices around a jointly agreed labelling of 'who we are'. Instead, it involves an iterative process of experimenting with

alternative 'characters' for the organization, before collectively settling on a hybrid identity that integrates the hybrid elements of the organization into a coherent whole.

DISCUSSION

Our findings elaborate how a hybrid organizational identity is formed in a social enterprise. In this section we first contextualize these findings and then draw out the implications for further theorizing and research on organizational identity formation in hybrid organizations. Finally, we discuss the role of founders and leaders within hybrid organizations.

Organizational Identity Formation in Hybrid Organizations

Prior research has pointed to the limited amount of research on the formation of an organizational identity, with an even more acute lack of research on such formation processes in the context of hybrid organizations (Gioia et al., 2013; Pratt, 2016). Research on hybrid organizations that mentions organizational identity (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Smith and Besharov, 2019) does not directly address the formation process but features organizational identity as part of other theoretical and research interests such as mission drift or paradoxical thinking (Battilana et al., 2017; Smith and Besharov, 2019). Existing work is furthermore grounded in traditional conceptions of organizational identity as a cognitive categorization of an organization or as relatively consensual, inter-subjective social construction (e.g., Gioia et al., 2013) that is gradually formed and then defines the organization. Battilana and Dorado (2010) for example draw on this traditional perspective to suggest that employees of micro-finance institutions in their study held onto separate internalized knowledge structures of banking and social development, making it hard to bridge these separate organizational identities to form a generally shared one.

Our findings elaborate the organizational identity formation process in a social enterprise and offer a theoretical alternative to these positions. We conceptualize the formation process as a process of character formation (Selznick, 2008), where leaders and members stretched the identity in different directions and experimented with alternative characters, as provisional identities, as part of a process of *becoming* an integrated hybrid organization. This process of *becoming* involves members of a social enterprise working through competing identity definitions, before settling on a hybrid identity for the enterprise as a practical 'accomplishment' (Sandberg et al., 2015, p. 331).

This process of character formation consists of two interconnected parts – members figuring out 'who they are' in terms of their espoused dual mission and their characterization of the organization and experimenting with 'what they do' in terms of their product and social impact strategies. Our process model elaborates how members of a hybrid organization work out a provisional sense of who they are as an organization, ground such understandings in their product and social impact activities towards stakeholders ('what we do') and reinforce a collective sense of self ('who we are') as they act upon such grounded understandings. In this way, the model offers a process perspective of how organizational identity is gradually constructed and formed in hybrid organizations through both 'sayings and "doings"'.

Through our emphasis on 'sayings' and 'doings', our account contrasts with models of organizational identity formation that cast it as primarily a negotiation around discursive labels or 'sayings' (Ashforth et al., 2011; Gioia et al., 2010). Organizational identities are actively formed and reformed – or rather 'worked' and 'reworked' (Brown, 2015; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) – in both talk and actions about key identity attributes such as a hybrid organization's dual mission, product and social impact strategies. Defining a dual mission, for example, is a key part of organizational identity work for hybrid organizations; with members actively trying to figure out how they may combine multiple objectives and values into an integrated hybrid mission (Grimes et al., 2019). Similarly, what members of a hybrid organization *do* in terms of the stakeholders they are serving and the product they are working on – and whether this product has itself a hybrid character – shapes and grounds their understanding of the identity of the social enterprise as a whole, as well as any meaning voids that they experience at particular points in time as 'sayings' and 'doings' are out of sync.

With this process model of organizational identity formation, we thus subscribe to the metaphor of 'identity work', which as Brown (2015) argues has great potential as a theoretical frame to bridge from the individual to the organizational level of analysis. Limited work however exists to date that does so, despite the recognition that when individuals form a sense of self in organizations (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) this is oftentimes interconnected with working out a socially situated definition of who they are as an organized group (Brown, 2015). One of the few studies to date that extends identity work to the organizational level is the study by Kreiner et al. (2015) of a church organization undergoing change. They describe processes of 'organizational identity work', defined as 'the cognitive, discursive, and behavioural processes in which individuals engage to create, present, sustain, share, and/or adapt organizational identity' (Kreiner et al., 2015, p. 985). Their study, however, focused on changes to an existing organizational identity in an established organization, as opposed to an emergent social enterprise where members collectively work through the process of forming an organizational identity. In this setting, we found a specific type of identity work (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003, p. 1165) whereby leaders dealt with identity-related tensions at the organizational level. We observed leaders playing with existing labels and descriptions, reordering means and ends of previous identity construals, and fusing sets of ideas into more integrative frames. They in turn communicated these images to others in the social enterprise, and by doing so fostered collective processes of sensemaking about the organization, its character and product, and the strategies of the enterprise towards social impact. Whilst the constructions that the leaders formed were in the first instance personal and reflexive (Brown, 2015), these referred to the organization (rather than themselves) and involved agentic and forward-driven 'organizational identity work' on their part through which they were supporting the entire organization in the process of *becoming* a hybrid organization.

Our study offers a theoretical platform for future studies to examine the patterns and processes through which organizational identities are formed in hybrid organizations. Future research may take our model and key concepts as a starting point and elaborate the degree to which identity formation in other hybrid organizations goes through a similar sequence of processes and phases. It may for example be interesting to study whether social enterprises with different business models go through a similar formation process,

or whether indeed their identity formation process is markedly different depending on internal building blocks of organizations, such as organizational design and workforce composition (Battilana and Lee, 2014). Such comparative research may then also deepen our understanding of the identity work that takes places around key attributes such as the dual mission, product and social impact strategies, and may further explore how beyond the formation of an identity the alignment between these attributes may sustain an enterprise's hybridity over time.

Further research may also extend the lens of identity work to the organizational level, as we have started to do in this study. There is ample potential for studies of organizational identity emergence and change to be conceived from this perspective (Brown, 2015). There has been only one study to date (Kreiner et al., 2015) from this perspective, with existing research on organizational identity firmly anchored in category, interpretive and social actor theoretical perspectives (Gioia et al., 2013). However, if we consider processes of organizational identity formation and change from a processual and constructivist perspective, the work metaphor has much to offer as a theoretical frame (Brown, 2015). Further research may for example explore specific work-like activities through which organizational identities are formed and shaped, adjusted and changed, or maintained as an ongoing project over time, and with any resulting organizational identity being an ongoing and effortful accomplishment. Research may then also explore how such processes take on a different form, or are more pronounced, in hybrid or institutionally complex settings (Pratt, 2016) as members of an organization need to work through hybrid tensions on an ongoing basis (Smith and Besharov, 2019).

Managing Hybridity through Leader Re-Keying

Earlier research has described individual and collective processes of sensemaking in social enterprises, with commercial and social aspects being either fused in the minds of employees (Jay, 2013; Miller et al., 2012) or creating clashes that require ongoing negotiation at the individual, group and organizational levels (Battilana and Dorado, 2010; Smith and Besharov, 2019). We add to this body of work by identifying and theorizing processes of re-keying through which leaders can influence the ongoing sensemaking and actions of the organization's members as a hybrid organizational identity is formed.

Leader re-keying involves intentional acts of re-figuring and re-grounding prior labels and ideas whereby a leader intentionally disrupts prevailing understandings but does so in ways that allow organizational members to reconnoitre and form a coherent new and potentially integrative meaning. In particular, re-keying offers a way in which alternative understandings can be combined and 'laminated', or stacked, on one another so as to promote integrative new understandings to others in the organization (see Goffman, 1974), thus offering creative solutions to the twin goals of commercial viability and social impact. In this way, re-keying may, like integrative thinking, address the 'either/or' opposition between social and business logics. However, unlike most forms of integrative or paradoxical thinking (Schad et al., 2016), it may allow social entrepreneurs to surpass a 'both/and' blending of social and commercial aspects by enabling the forging of a newly framed and altered understanding of their combination – what Putnam et al. (2016) refer to as a 'more than' emergent meaning.

By highlighting such processes of leader re-keying we contribute to our understanding of key leadership tactics in social enterprises. Prior work has primarily focused on the ability of leaders or managers in hybrid organizations to think in paradoxical or integrative ways (Miller et al., 2012; Smith and Besharov, 2019). Integrative or paradoxical thinking involves the ability through perspective taking from both sides to either arrive at more holistic solutions or to keep both sides in play (Miller et al., 2012, p. 618; Schad et al., 2016; Smith and Besharov, 2019). Re-keying goes beyond such individual cognitive processes and describes a creative and symbolic process (in words and actions) through which leaders reconfigure and then fuse prior understandings into a new, emergent meaning for others. In our case, we observed such leader re-keying in two crucial episodes in the hybrid identity formation process and carried out by two different leaders. Future research may extend these findings and explore how and to what extent founders or leaders play a decisive role through re-keying in the identity formation process in other social enterprises. In our study, both the incoming leader (the Chief Technology Officer) and the founding CEO were both confronted by a sense giving imperative (through members experiencing meaning voids) as part of the process of forming a hybrid organizational identity. In other social enterprises, it may well be that individual leaders when confronted by similar circumstances may not experience a sense giving imperative in the same way, nor may they feel compelled to help others make sense of the organization's hybridity. The collective sensemaking dynamics that would ensue may then be markedly different, potentially affecting the ability of the entire organization to form a hybrid organizational identity.

Leader re-keying also points to another area for further research. The work on multi-founder teams within the entrepreneurship literature (Powell and Baker, 2017) has not yet been extended into the context of social enterprises with most research to date still focused on individual founding social entrepreneurs (e.g., Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Wry and York, 2017). Our study observed that founders do not always remain in leadership positions throughout the formation of a social enterprise. Professional leadership may come in and influence the formation of the social enterprise and its identity as much as the original founders or their vision. Future research on social enterprises and on hybrid organizational identity formation may therefore fruitfully distinguish between founders and other leaders and their roles and contributions to the organization's hybridity. Research may for example adopt a power lens on hybrid organizational identity formation by exploring the way in which dominant coalitions within an enterprise form and influence the formation of its identity. And instead of assuming founders as equals, it may be fruitful to compare the position and influence of founders vis-à-vis one another in multiple founder teams and then trace the differential impact of such team composition on the development of a social enterprise.

CONCLUSION

To date, there has been limited research on the formation of a hybrid organizational identity in social enterprises. Through an in-depth, longitudinal study of the Dutch social enterprise Fairphone we unfold the process of identity formation in this setting

and elaborate the sequences and activities through which a hybrid identity is ultimately formed. As part of this process, we highlight the active efforts by leaders to guide and support the formation of a hybrid organizational identity. We hope that by offering these insights our research inspires further work that advances our understanding of how a hybrid organizational identity is formed and how founders and leaders can build and grow social enterprises with a sustained hybrid character.

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NOTES

[1] In the first period, Fairphone communicated via Twitter its goals as a social movement with the slogan 'buy a phone, start a movement!'. After the first smartphone was delivered to customers (December 2013 – February 2014), Fairphone's Twitter communication became almost exclusively focused on the product and on consumers, with an emphasis on production updates and phone features. This was reflected in key phrases like 'production-and-distribution-update', 'subscribe' (for buying a phone), and references to 'articles' on 'Zendesk', a software the company used to manage customer service. In the third period, communication is marked by a shift away from a product-centric vocabulary to the community (e.g., '#wearefairphone') and a return to the campaign-style storytelling of the first phase with the promotion of open design and recycling issues (e.g., '#opendesign' and '#3dprinting').

[2] The literature on objects within management research is vast and reflects different theoretical approaches, such as work on boundary objects, epistemic objects and activity systems (see Nicolini et al., 2012). Consistent with our observations, we draw here primarily on work that focuses on active processes of sensemaking around epistemic objects in communities (Knorr Cetina, 1997). As such, we do not engage recent work within organization studies on sociomateriality which focuses on the ecology of mundane objects that form the substratum, or 'scaffolding' (Orlikowski, 2007) for much social and organized activity.

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Appendix 1. Topic Guide for Interview

Topic	*Questions*
Preamble	*[Set the stage. State that interview is confidential and for academic purposes only. Request permission to electronically record interview]*
What is your role in Fairphone?	How did you become involved in Fairphone?
	[Probe: ask for dates joined enterprise, understanding of role in company, whom collaborating with]
What do you do?	What are the main activities in your role?
	[probe: ask for specific account of work, and of their understanding of the work they do and its aims]
Mission and purpose	What were you as company trying to achieve when you joined? And now?
	[Probe: Ask for specific goals, concrete examples]
Challenges faced	What were the main challenges faced in your role?
	[Probe: Ask for specific examples of events, people and dates]
Open question	Is there anything you would like to tell me that I haven't asked but should know?
	Is there anyone else that you think I should speak with?
Close out	Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Appendix 2. Updated Topic Guide

Topic	*Questions*
Preamble	*[Set the stage. State that interview is confidential and for academic purposes only. Request permission to electronically record interview]*
What is your role in Fairphone?	What is your role and how has it changed since you started?
	[Probe: ask for specific activities that s/he is involved in, whom collaborating with and examples of change where relevant]
Development of the enterprise	How do you think the enterprise has been developing?
	[probe: ask for specific events and milestones and for their understanding of the nature of the enterprise]
Mission and purpose	What were you as company trying to achieve when you joined? And now?
	[Probe: Ask for specific goals, concrete examples; comparison with before]
Meaning of Fairphone	What does FP stand for? What does that mean for the activities of the organization and your own role? Has this changed and if so, how? [Probe: Examples of how FP describes itself and concrete examples of what they do]
Challenges faced	What have been the main challenges you faced in your role? How do these challenges align with those that you see for the enterprise as a whole?
	[Probe: Ask for specific examples of events, people and dates]
Open question	Is there anything you would like to tell me that I haven't asked but should know?
	Is there anyone else that you think I should speak with?
Close out	Is there anything you would like to ask me?