MAINTAINING VALUES AND IDENTITY DURING A CRISIS

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# Maintaining Values and Identity During a Crisis

1. December 2010

## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BP as case study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis outline</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical data</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Conduct</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability review 2009</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press releases</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of Theory</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of identity</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational identity versus corporate identity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is corporate identity important for an organisation?</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity diagrams</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability of identity</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of values</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal values and organisational values</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values in a collective unite</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core values</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The stability of values</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rokeach Value Survey</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis theory</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis definitions</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAINTAINING VALUES AND IDENTITY DURING A CRISIS
1. december 2010

Crisis Management ............................................................................................................. 32
Stages of crisis ................................................................................................................... 33
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 35
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 36
Analysis ............................................................................................................................. 36
Code of Conduct ............................................................................................................... 37
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 40
Sustainability Review 2009 ............................................................................................ 40
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 43
Press releases ...................................................................................................................... 44
During the crisis .................................................................................................................. 44
After the crisis ..................................................................................................................... 47
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 48
Comparing the Results ....................................................................................................... 48
Results of the code of conduct ......................................................................................... 48
Results of the sustainability review .................................................................................. 49
Results of the press releases ............................................................................................. 49
Comparison ....................................................................................................................... 50
Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 51
Discussion .......................................................................................................................... 51
Discussion of the results ..................................................................................................... 52
Values ................................................................................................................................. 52
Results of analysis and the Value Survey .......................................................................... 54
Discussion of the results of Aust’s study ........................................................................... 55
Further perspectives on the Value Survey ......................................................................... 55
Identity ............................................................................................................................... 57
Schultz ................................................................................................................................. 57
Balmer and Greyser ........................................................................................................... 58
Finding identity with values .............................................................................................. 58
Has BP’s identity changed? ............................................................................................... 59
Is identity unstable? ............................................................................................................ 59
Final thoughts on values and identity.................................................................60
Conclusion........................................................................................................60
Conclusion........................................................................................................61
List of sources.......................................................................................................64
Books..................................................................................................................64
Articles................................................................................................................64
Websites...............................................................................................................66
Reports...............................................................................................................66
Abstract

Research has proven that values are significant ingredients in organisations as well they are human attributes. Organisations use values as reminders of how they should run their businesses, which correlates to individuals’ behaviour guidelines. They present their respective values on their websites or in other communication material to show the public that they are devoted to running a business with its ethics and morals in place. As with individuals, values might also serve the purpose of being ultimate goals to organisations, whether that be discovering new and better medicine, being market leaders, or providing electricity to desolated societies.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss if it is possible for an organisation to maintain its values and identity during a crisis event. The aim is to determine whether or not values and identity are deeply rooted in an organisation or if they are merely fleeting concepts, adjusted to fit the situation, in which the organisation finds itself.

The thesis is based on a qualitative analysis with BP and the oil spill crisis from 2010 as case example in order to discover if BP’s values have changed during this period. The empirical data consists of BP’s code of conduct, sustainability review from 2009, and press releases published during and after the period of crisis.

The theoretical part of the thesis accounts for the concepts of identity and values and also crisis theory. Theory on identity has been applied in order to determine the difference between corporate identity and organisational identity. Furthermore, to illustrate how identity can be approached Schultz’s Corporate Brand Tool Kit and Balmer and Greyser’s AC²ID Test have been applied, and they have been discussed in order to determine which one of the diagrams is most useful for determining BP’s identity. This is followed by an introduction to the concept of values, where the difference between personal and corporate values, plus regular values and core values are presented. The value instrument, the Rokeach Value Survey, is a significant part of the analysis as it is used to determine BP’s values. It is, however, also discussed whether the Value Survey really is possible to apply to organisations. Finally, the concept of crisis is accounted for in order to provide an overview of how a crisis is structured. It is determined that a crisis can be divided into three stages, in which different actions must be taken.
In the analysis several aspects are examined in order to discover BP’s values, namely the code of conduct, the sustainability report and the group of press releases. By locating words that describe BP’s goals or behaviour and determining which words have the highest occurrence it is determined that these words are among BP’s values. This is followed by a comparative analysis of the located values from the press releases from the beginning of the crisis and after the crisis, respectively, in order to determine if BP’s values have changed. The results of the analysis of the code of conduct and the sustainability report belong to different text genres and therefore only support the values discovered in the press releases from the beginning of the crisis.

The results of analysis shows that overall, the same values are located in both groups of press releases. However, the analysis also shows that BP’s focus and primary communicated values change during the crisis period. The thesis determines that BP is not consistent, because at the beginning of the crisis they are focusing on “commitment”, whereas after the crisis they are focusing on “safety” and “trust”. This is due to the necessity of changing in order to keep up with their environment, which corresponds to Thyssen’s theory on values and instability.

This is followed by a discussion of how the values in the Rokeach Value Survey correlate to the values found in the analysis. It is determined that there is no real consistency between the groups of values and therefore the relevance of the value instrument in connection with organisations is questioned and modification is suggested. Following this, an idea to a value instrument that could be applied to organisations is proposed. Afterwards the thesis discusses the diagrams presented in the theory chapter in order to determine which one of them are most suitable for describing BP’s identity. It is argued that Schultz’s diagram is quite wide-ranging in its way of presenting the concept of identity, while Balmer and Greyser’s is more specific. It is therefore determined that the latter is more useful in presenting BP’s identity.

By using the values found in the analysis, BP’s identity is determined. It is then discussed if BP’s identity has changed during the crisis and if the concept of identity generally can be regarded as unstable. The findings show that BP’s identity has changed during the crisis, which intensifies the discussion of the instability of identity.
All in all, it can be argued that BP’s values and identity change during the crisis period. Hence, values and identity are not particularly deeply rooted in BP, rather they are seem to be fleeting concepts, adjusted to fit the situation, in which the organisation finds itself.

*Number of characters: 4,399.*
Values are generally regarded as human attributions and associated with individuals; they serve the purpose as guidelines for our everyday-behaviour, and constitute the ultimate goals we might have and the purposes of our lives.

However, research has proven that values are not only attributed to individuals; values are significant ingredients in organisations as well. Organisations use values as reminders of how they should run their businesses, which correlates to individuals’ behaviour guidelines. They present their respective values on their websites or in other communication material to show the public that they are devoted to running a business with its ethics and morals in place. As with individuals, values might also serve the purpose of being ultimate goals to organisations, whether that be discovering new and better medicine, being market leaders, or providing electricity to desolated societies.

However, one could ask how persistent these values are; are they merely fleeting concepts or do organisations hang on to them, even in critical situations? If an organisation declares its dedication to safety and still, accidents occur, what does this say about the organisation and its values? Are they simply empty promises, perhaps nothing but a facade?

Some researchers support this view; for example, Schultz argues that values are unstable and are bound to change at some point; Thyssen claims that values need to change, otherwise the organisation will appear old-fashioned and out of step with how organisations ought to behave. However, if an organisation suddenly changes its core essence, will it question its sincerity?

This is only one of the reasons why it is interesting to study how an organisation reacts to a critical situation in regard to values. If values are bound to change, will a crisis accelerate the changing process? Or is the instability only speculations? Can values be strong enough to endure even the most critical of situations?

**BP as case study**

This leads to the case study of this thesis. Instead of conducting a quantitative analysis with several cases, a qualitative analysis will be conducted instead. The reason for this is that a quantitative study would be too comprehensive for this thesis. A single-case-study might not be
completely accurate compared to a study with multiple cases, but it might still provide useful knowledge of the tendency in regard to the stability of values, which could be useful for more in-depth research.

The organisation that has been chosen to be the case for this thesis is the British oil company BP. The reason for choosing this organisation is primarily because of the oil spill crisis in April 2010; because of the proportions of the incident and its recentness, there is plenty of material to conduct an analysis. On their website BP emphasise their dedication to safety and protecting the environment; yet, they caused one of the greatest environmental devastations on US grounds since the Exxon Valdez incident in 1989. In addition, BP have previously been involved in accidents due to poor security measures, for example in Texas in 2005, and despite promises of high safety measures yet another accident occurred.

The question is; has this affected BP’s sincerity and in what way? Did they stay true to their values during the crisis, despite the risk of appearing hypocritical? And if they did, how can this be interpreted? This leads to the problem state of this thesis, which will serve as benchmark for the analysis and discussion. The overall purpose is to discover the following:

**Are values and identity deeply rooted in an organisation or are they fleeting concepts, adjusted to fit the situation, in which the organisation finds itself?**

More specifically, the purpose of this thesis is to discover if BP’s values have changed during the crisis and thereafter discuss the results with a view to discover if values are stable or merely fleeting entities. The analysis will be partially based on Rokeach’s Value Survey and in that connection it will be evident to examine how the values listed in his theory correlate to the values that will be located in BP’s communication.

**Thesis outline**

This leads on to the outline of this thesis, which will provide the reader with an overview of the paper.

After the introductory part of this thesis follows the method section, where there will be presented a more thorough assessment of the structure of the thesis and accounted for the delimitations. There will be a short description of the contents of every chapter in the thesis in
order to provide the reader an overview of the content of the thesis. Afterwards there will be given account for the theory which will provide the fundamental basis of this thesis. The areas, which will be focused on, are identity, values and crisis. There will be particular focus on Rokeach and his Value Survey, which will be the underlying reference point for the analysis and discussion.

Following this is the analysis section, where the tools acquired in the theory section will be taken into use. By locating values in BP’s communication, there will be a comparison of the values found in the press releases published during and after the crisis respectively. By comparing the values, it will be possible to determine if BP’s values have changed during the crisis. That will lead on to a discussion of the results and what affect they might have on the opinion of values. Furthermore, there will be a comparison of the values found in the analysis and Rokeach’s Value Survey with the purpose of discussion if this theory is suitable for organisations. Finally, the last section of the thesis will be dedicated to the conclusion of the content of the thesis.

After having accounted for the introduction of this thesis, I will now move on to presenting the method section.

**Method**

In this section there will be accounted for the method of this thesis. There will be an illustration of the structure of the thesis,

This thesis will deal with values and identity in an organisational context with a case analysis of BP’s communication during the oil spill crisis as a qualitative example.

**Structure**

This thesis consists of three major parts: the theoretical part, the analytic part and the discussing part. These three parts will constitute the majority of the thesis, which will be concluded on in the final part of the thesis. In order to obtain a better overview of the thesis, I have illustrated the structure of it below:

In chapter 1 there will be provided an introduction to the overall subject, in order for the reader to be able to place this thesis into a wider context. Furthermore, the problem statement, which this
thesis is based on, will be presented. Followed by this there will also be accounted for the empirical data, which the analysis will be based on, the delimitations and finally, the method.

In chapter 2 the theory of identity is presented and how it is important for an organisation to have one is discussed. There will also be a discussion of the challenges of managing an identity. Furthermore, there will be special focus on the theory of Schultz and Balmer and Greyser.

In chapter 3 the theory of values is accounted for. It will be explained how values function in a collective unit and how they are of importance to an organisation. Furthermore, there will be focus on Rokeach and his highly acclaimed Value Survey.

In chapter 4 the theory of crisis will be provided and the structure is explained, which the crisis is built up from. Knowing how a crisis is structured is necessary in order to understand the situation BP have gone through.

In chapter 5 the analysis will be conducted. The purpose of the analysis is to investigate if BP’s values and identity have changed during the crisis. I have chosen to make a qualitative analysis for this thesis with BP as the only organisation. The analysis will be based on BP’s Code of Conduct, Sustainability Review from 2009, plus some of their press released which was published during and after the crisis. The sustainability review was released in April 2010, just before the oil spill occurred. For that reason the review is a good example of pre-crisis communication. The analysis of values will be based on the aforementioned theory of Rokeach, and the analysis of identity will be based on Shultz and Balmer and Greyser, primarily.

In chapter 6 the findings of the analysis will be discussed and it will be determined whether BP’s values and identity have changed or not. In addition, there will be a discussion of Rokeach’s Value Survey and how it applies to the values of an organisation. Followed by that, BP’s identity will be discussed and it will be determined how the theories of Balmer and Greyser and Schultz respectively match BP’s identity.

Finally, in chapter 7 there will be concluded on the findings of the analysis and the discussion of these, and furthermore, the results are put into a wider perspective.
Empirical data
The empirical data for this thesis consist of BP’s code of conduct, sustainability review from 2009 and press releases which were published at the beginning and during the crisis. The empirical data will create the basis for a comparative analysis, which will seek to answer the problem statement. Below I will give account for the reasons for including these texts in the empirical data.

Code of Conduct
The reason for choosing BP’s code of conduct for this analysis is because it provides a good, overall presentation of BP’s values and ethics, which could be significant for the analysis.

The International Federation of Accountants defines the code of conduct as consisting of “Principles, values, standards, or rules of behaviour that guide the decisions, procedures and systems of an organization in a way that (a) contributes to the welfare of its key stakeholders, and (b) respects the right of all constituents affected by its operations.” For that reason, the code of conduct could contain important information that could be useful for the analysis of BP’s values and identity.

Sustainability review 2009
The second text that is included in the empirical data is BP’s sustainability review from 2009 and the reason for choosing it is because it also provides a good insight into their values and ethics. In the text BP touch upon subjects like sustainability, innovative technology, etc.

The sustainability review was published April 2010, just before the crisis emerged, and for that reason it is also very relevant.

It should be mentioned, though, that the code of conduct and the sustainability review cannot be directly included in the analysis; the reason for this is that in order to do a proper comparison, the included parts must belong to the same genre of text. Therefore, only the press releases can be accurately compared to one another. However, the code of conduct and the sustainability review can support the values located at the beginning of the crisis and are therefore included.

IFAC, 2007, 6.
Press releases

The reason for choosing press releases for this analysis is because it is a common way for an organisation to communicate with the media and stakeholders; during a crisis, communication is particularly important for an organisation in order to inform the media and calm its stakeholders, and for that purpose press releases are an obvious choice in this situation because they can be published quickly.

Choice of Theory

In order to answer the problem statement, it is necessary to acquire knowledge of the theories of values and identity, which are the primary concepts used in this thesis. Below I will give account for the theories I have chosen to use for this thesis and why they are of interest to it.

The primary theories that will constitute the theory section consist of Rokeach’s Value Survey, Shultz’s Corporate Brand Tool Kit, and Balmer and Greyser’s AC²ID test.

Rokeach’s theory has been chosen for this thesis because it offers a good underlying basis for analysing values. His theory dates back to 1969 and until now, every attempt to reducing the thirty-six values in his Value Survey has failed. While his findings should be perceived as being nothing more than general, they can still be of great use when analysing BP’s values. According to Rokeach, it is also possible to apply the Value Survey onto organisations as well, and therefore, this thesis will try to determine if there is any validity in that claim.

Schultz’s Corporate Brand Tool Kit has been chosen because it illustrates how a corporate brand identity is structured and how misalignment between the elements of the brand identity can make gaps appear and thereby weaken it. It has also been chosen in order to make a contrast to Balmer and Greyser’s AC²ID Test, which is based on the assumption that an organisation can have more than one identity, whereas the Corporate Brand Tool Kit works with only one. However, both theories work on the premise that too much misalignment between the elements or identities will cause damage to the organisation.

Describing and comparing these two theories will illustrate how complex identity is and how difficult it can be to manage. However, it will also show how rewarding it is for the organisation when the identity is properly managed.
Finally, I have chosen to include Coombs in my thesis in order to explain what a crisis is and how it is constructed. Coombs claims that a crisis can be divided into three stages: pre-crisis, crisis event and post-crisis. Knowing these stages will be useful when analysing BP’s communication. The reason for choosing Coombs instead of some other author is because Coombs has done much research on crisis and is highly acclaimed for his work, such as his further development on Benoit’s Image Restoration Strategy.

Because this thesis focuses primarily on values and identity, I will not be going into too much detail with the theory of crisis. It is still important, though, that there is given account for this subject because the analysis of the values and identity is based on a crisis situation. Furthermore, in order to be able to recognise when BP’s communication can be determined post-crisis material, it is necessary to have knowledge of the structure of a crisis.

By acquiring knowledge of these theories, it will be possible to provide the foundation for the analysis, and thereby answer the question asked in the problem statement.

**Delimitations**

This thesis is structured as a theoretical paper and I have chosen to focus on one organisation only for this thesis. For that reason the analysis will be of qualitative character instead of quantitative character. The reason for this is that I found that a thesis with several case studies would be too immense for a thesis of this size, and it could affect the results of the analysis. Therefore, I found it preferable to focus on one case only.

On the other hand, because there will only be one case, I am aware of the possibility that the results of the analysis might not be completely reliable; in order to determine the accuracy of the results, it would be necessary with further research to support them. However, I am positive that the analysis will bear some interesting results, which will inspire to more thorough research on this area.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration is the time frame of the crisis. Because of the recentness of the event, it can be argued that the crisis still has not reached a conclusion; there is still plenty of cleaning-up to do at the afflicted shores of the Mexican Gulf and there are still compensation claims from those who have been negatively impacted by the crisis. For these
reasons one might say that it is too early for conducting such a study, and I am fully aware of the fact that the study might be affected by these factors. On the other hand, it could be interesting to discover if there is a possibility of finding any development at this early stage.

With that being said, I am fully aware that the result of the analysis might not show any development in BP’s identity and values. If this turns out to be the case, I will account for the results in the discussion later on in this thesis and argue if the reason for the results is because BP have been able to maintain their identity and values during the crisis or if they just have not undergone any modification yet.

After having accounted for the method of this thesis, I will now move on to the theoretical part, where I will account for the three areas of theory that is of relevance to answering the problem statement of this thesis.

**Theory**

The purpose of this section is to provide the theoretical background of this thesis. It is necessary to have a proper theoretical foundation in order to conduct the analysis and to answer the problem statement and other discussion points that might arise along the way. Because the purpose of this thesis is to answer the question if an organisation can maintain its identity and values in a crisis situation, it is a necessity to first provide the essential theory of these terms. Therefore, the primary themes of the theory section will be accounting for identity, values and crisis.

The structure of the theory section will be as follows: first, there will be given account for the theory of identity, followed by the theory of values and finally, there will be an assessment of the theory of crisis. There will be a conclusion on the findings at the end of the chapter.

**Identity**

In this section, there will be first be presented some definitions of identity; these definitions will be the underlying basis of the theory, which will be used for the analysis later on. Followed by this, there will be accounted for the difference between corporate and organisational identity, how identity is important for an organisation and finally, I will discuss the challenges of identity.
Definitions of identity

Because identity is a broad term, there is no one accepted definition of it; most theoreticians have their own particular definition and opinion about what identity is. The definitions presented below are from researchers, which will be used in this thesis in general. These definitions will hopefully provide the reader with an idea as to how this term can be understood.

Whetten defines identity as “the central and enduring attributes of an organization that distinguish it from other organizations.” In other words, identity can be described as the characteristics that constitute the organisation. The fact that Whetten argues that it is important for an organisation to have an identity in order to differentiate itself from the competition, makes this definition very much marketing-related.

Aust defines it as “an organization’s distinctive character discernible by those communicated values manifest in its externally transmitted messages.” Aust’s approach to identity is different compared to Whetten’s, as he does not touch upon the aspect of identity being something that distinguishes the organisation from competitors. Instead, he describes identity as being the organisation’s distinctive character that is capable of being interpreted from the organisation’s communication. Thereby, he also explains how to locate an organisation’s identity, which Whetten does not account for.

Compared to Whetten and Aust, Gioia, Schultz and Corley have a rather different comprehension of the term. They define identity as “...a potentially precarious and unstable notion, frequently up for redefinition and revision by organization members.” They do not touch on any of the themes that were presented in the two other definitions; in fact, they argue that identity can be interpreted as something fluid and not a stable core of the organisation. This is something that will be elaborated on later on in this thesis, as this has major importance to the problem statement.

All three definitions are interesting because they have their own particular idea of what identity is. There are more definitions than the three mentioned above, but because identity is such a complex phenomenon, it can be narrowed down to two sub-concepts: corporate identity and

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2 Whetten, 2006, 220.
4 Gioia et al., 2000, 64.
organisational identity. This is something which will be elaborated on in the following section, where there will also be presented more definitions. Some of the supporters of distinguishing between corporate identity and organisational identity are Balmer and Greyser, who do not offer an overall definition of identity. They are particularly interesting for this thesis, because they have a completely different view on identity than those mentioned above. This will be accounted for in much more detail later on in this thesis.

With that being said, so far it can be concluded from the definitions mentioned previously that identity can be defined as the characteristics of an organisation that differentiates it from other organisations. Now, I will account for the difference between organisational identity and corporate identity.

Organisational identity versus corporate identity

As determined above, much research has been conducted on identity and it has resulted in the unfurling of an umbrella, where concepts like social identity, organisational identity and corporate identity can be discovered. The two terms that are of greatest interest to this thesis are corporate identity and organisational identity. While they are similar in many ways, they also have their own, distinctive characteristics, which will be accounted for below. I have decided not to include social identity in this section, because I found that it has no direct relevance for this thesis.

Corporate identity

Corporate identity can be defined as “the distinctive public image that a corporate entity communicates that structures people’s engagement with it.” According to Cornelissen, Haslam and Balmer, corporate identity used to be in connection with marketing and design, and was generally regarded as the visual side of the organisation. Today, it has grown to be more than just the surface of the organisation, as it is now closely related to the organisation’s communicated values and image. As Cornelissen et al., claim, “it is fundamentally concerned with “what the organisation is...” For that reason, when dealing with corporate identity, you think of the organisation as a whole.

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5 Balmer and Greyser, 2002, 19.
6 Cornelissen et al., 2007, S3.
7 Ibid., S7.
Gioia et al. offer a more detailed definition of corporate identity as they argue that it is “consistent and targeted representations of the corporation emphasized through the management of corporate symbols and logos; strategically planned and operationally applied internal and external self-representation.” In other words, visuals are still closely related to corporate identity, but Gioia et al. argue that the concept is not only dealing with public image; it is also related to how it is regarded from within the organisation.

**Organisational identity**

Organisational identity can be defined as “the shared meaning that an organizational entity is understood to have that arises from its members’ (and others’) awareness that they belong to it.” In other words, the organisation identity can be regarded as a set of values that is shared by the members of the organisation. In this context, the main question is “Who am I (as an organization)?” For that reason, it can be argued that when dealing with organisation identity, you think of the organisation as being constituted by individuals that share a collective feeling.

Hatch and Schultz explain that organisational identity “refers broadly to what members perceive, feel and think about their organizations. It is assumed to be a collective, commonly-shared understanding of the organization’s distinctive values and characteristics.” They argue that organisational identity is looking more inwards to the core of the organisation compared to corporate identity, which focuses more on vision, strategy and external audiences.

**Discussion**

Both terms offer useful knowledge of how identity in an organisational context can be understood. For the sake of clarity, however, only one of the presented terms will be used for this thesis. Therefore, it is necessary to determine which term will be most beneficial. It can be argued that the definition of corporate identity appears to be more fitting compared to how this thesis will be working with organisations and identity. The reason for this is that corporate identity deals both with values but also the organisation’s communication which will be a part of this thesis’ empirical data. Furthermore, for this thesis it is only possible to acquire information about BP’s values and

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1 Gioia et al., 2000, 67.
2 Cornelissen et al., 2007, S3.
3 Ibid., S6.
4 Ibid., 357.
5 Hatch and Schultz, 1997, 357.
6 Ibid., 357.
thoughts of identity through their communication; it is not possible to obtain this information from within BP.

After having determined that corporate identity fits best with this thesis, there will now be accounted for the importance it has for an organisation.

**How is corporate identity important for an organisation?**

So far it is apparent that identity is a significant part of an organisation. Balmer agrees with this because as he explains, “Corporate identity forms the bedrock of corporate communications ... corporate reputation ... and corporate branding ...” In other words, corporate identity is a concept that has deep roots in organisations; it forms the basis for both internal and external matters such as communication, but also how it is viewed by others and how it chooses to portray itself.

Olins supports this claim, because according to him, “...corporate identity is an activity which essentially must be directed from within – it is after all the essence of the company.” In other words, an organisation’s identity is something that is determined by the organisation itself, and external factors should not have any direct influence on shaping it. Because the corporate identity has to be determined from within, it can be argued that it is the top management who shapes it, because they are closest to the core of the organisation.

Another reason why corporate identity is important to organisation is, according to Albert and Whetten, that an identity is crucial for an organisation’s success. It can be argued that this claim can be substantiated by the fact that many large, successful organisations all have powerful brands and strong identities. However, one would also argue that a defined and well-shaped identity would provide the organisation clarity over its business. Therefore, it can be argued that shaping your identity is an activity which organisations cannot afford not to use resources on.

**Identity diagrams**

In order to be able to examine BP’s identity, it is necessary to make the use of the theory in an analytical context; for that reason, the theory needs to be converted it into a diagram.
Below there will be presented two diagrams representing two different interpretations of how identity can be understood. The reason for presenting two different diagrams is to show that identity can be illustrated in more than one way. The first diagram which will be accounted for is Schultz’s Corporate Brand Tool Kit, which will be followed by Balmer and Greyser’s AC²ID test.

**The Corporate Brand Tool Kit**

One approach to examining an identity is by using The Corporate Brand Tool Kit, which is a diagram developed by Schultz.\(^{16}\) It illustrates the elements which constitute an organisation’s identity and describes the gaps that open between these elements, if misalignment should occur between them. The reason for choosing to include this diagram in this thesis is because it illustrates identity in a very general way, which makes it both easily understood and easily employed.

![Diagram: The Corporate Brand Tool Kit.](image)

As the diagram illustrates, the Corporate Brand Tool Kit constituted from three elements, which are all interconnected. The three elements are as follows:

- **Strategic vision**, which is the top managements’ vision of the organisation’s future achievements. It illustrates the goals of the organisation.

\(^{16}\) Schultz, 2005, 49.
- **Organisational culture**, which is the internal beliefs, which has a direct affect on how the employees feel about the organisation. It can also be described as the organisation’s values.

- **Stakeholder images**, which is how the organisation is perceived by stakeholders and the public in general. This can both be consumers, the media, etc. This element can also be described as the organisation’s reputation.

Because of the elements’ interconnectedness, they are all of equal importance to the corporate brand identity. Their dependency of each other makes it impossible for any of the elements to be out of sync with the others. In case this should happen, it would lead to misalignment between the elements. The result of this would be opening of gaps between the elements. The gaps, which are also portrayed in the diagram, can be described as follows:

- **Vision-culture gap**, which opens when the employees do not agree with the top management’s decisions; the result of this might be frustrated employees.

- **Vision-image gap**, which opens when the organisation do not live up to the stakeholders’ expectations of the organisation. One of possible results of this could be that the stakeholders choose to turn to another organisation.

- **Image-culture gap**, which opens when the organisation does not fulfil its promises and does not practice what it preaches. The result might be customers being confused about what the organisation stands for.

While there are different outcomes of each gap, the misalignments will lead to the same result in the end: a weakened and dysfunctional corporate brand identity.

It can be argued that this diagram can be of use to an organisation because it provides knowledge of how to maintain its corporate brand identity; by illustrating the different elements and how gaps can occur between them, the organisation is aware of how to take precautionary measures against them from emerging. However, the diagram also shows how challenging it can be to maintain an identity but in order for the identity to function properly, it is necessary for the organisation to put resources into this area.
Another approach to how identity can be understood is illustrated in the diagram developed by Balmer and Greyser, which is called The AC$^2$ID Test. According to Balmer and Greyser, an organisation at least one of the following five identity types; actual identity, communicated identity, conceived identity, ideal identity and desired identity. In fact, the diagram is constituted on the presupposition that it is possible for an organisation to have more than one identity at the same time. This is contrary to Schultz’s diagram which constitutes one only identity.

The five identities, which are illustrated in the figure below, can be explained as follows:

- Actual Identity – what the organisation really is right at this point.
- Communicated Identity – what the organisation says it is, which can be determined through its external communication. This corresponds to Schultz’s Organization Culture.
- Conceived Identity – how the organisation is regarded by others, which can both be stakeholders, consumers, media, etc. This corresponds to Schultz’s Stakeholder Images.
- Ideal Identity – what the organisation ought to be, and perhaps should strive to be.
- Desired Identity – what the organisation wants to be, which corresponds to Schultz’s Strategic Vision.
As mentioned above, Balmer and Greyser argue that it is possible for an organisation to function with several identities at once without this affecting the organisation negatively. Though, if misalignment should occur between two or more identities, it might either damage the organisation or cause it to grow weaker.\(^\text{18}\) However, according to Balmer and Greyser, it is possible for an organisation to function with some degree of misalignment between its identities in certain situations.\(^\text{19}\) This is yet another point that makes this diagram differ from the one produced by Schultz; the Corporate Brand Tool Kit cannot handle misalignment between the different elements whatsoever, as this would result in damaging of the identity. Balmer and Greyser’s diagram, on the other hand, can deal with some degree of misalignment without this resulting in weakening of the organisation.

This diagram can be beneficial to an organisation when it comes managing its one or more identities. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Balmer and Greyser argue that reviewing and maintenance of the corporate identity is something that should occur relatively often, especially considering the competition on the market.\(^\text{20}\) By constantly working on further developing the corporate identity, the organisation will be keep up with the societal development. However, as touched upon earlier as well, this gives rise to the discussion of the stability of identity. This matter will be touched upon in the next section.

The reason for including this diagram in the thesis is to illustrate a different perspective on how identity can be understood in comparison to Schultz’s approach to identity. This provides a greater appreciation of the concept, and there will be a discussion of how they each fit with BP’s identity later on in this thesis. First, however, there will be given account for the consistency of the concept.

### Stability of identity
As already mentioned earlier in this thesis, some theorists claim that identity is not necessarily a consistent matter. It could be argued that one might consider identity as a something of steady character, because it originates from deep within of an organisation.

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18 Balmer and Greyser, 2002, 16.
19 Ibid., 27.
20 Ibid., 27.
Gioia et al. generally support the idea that identity can be considered unstable, which was already mentioned earlier in the section of definitions. They argue that “an identity with a sense of continuity, however, is one that shifts in its interpretation and meaning while retaining labels for "core" beliefs and values that extend over time and context.” In other words, an identity needs to be modified in order to function in the long run. This claim is supported by Balmer and Greyser, who, as mentioned above, recommend regular modification of an organisation’s identity; in other words, they support the claim of instability and even encourage it themselves. Gioia et al. further argue that the core of an organisation’s identity is in flux, despite appearing stable. Just as Balmer and Greyser, Gioia et al. believe that an organisation will benefit from modifying their identity, at least to a certain degree.

Gioia et al. have yet another approach to the instability to identity, as they also argue that identity can be modified to fit the current situation. According to them, “taking a fluid approach to identity change implies that a “central” characteristic of identity might be its ability to shift and transform according to the context in which it is being expressed,” and, “...the instability of identity is actually adaptive in facilitating organizational change in response to environmental demands.” In other words, they claim that an organisation’s identity is easily modifiable if the environment demands it. It could be argued that a crisis might be one of the situations where an organisation’s environments would demand modification, depending on the type of crisis, of course. If the images of the stakeholders are at stake, one could argue that they will demand of the organisation to modify its identity in order to restore harmony.

Whether this instability can be detected in BP’s identity will most likely be determined later on in this thesis. However, if the indications are true, one could argue that the oil spill crisis would be an obvious accelerator for the changing of BP’s identity.

Conclusion

In this section there was first presented some definitions of identity, and afterwards there was given account for the difference between corporate identity and organisational identity. It was

21 Gioia et al., 2000, 65.
22 Ibid., 65.
23 Ibid., 77.
24 Ibid., 78.
25 Ibid., 64.
concluded that there should be focus on corporate identity only, as this term fitted better with this thesis. Afterwards there was given account for how identity was important to organisations and there was provided two very different diagrams to illustrate how identity could be approached. Finally, there was touched upon the stability of identity.

After having given account for the theory of identity, I will now move on to the second part of the theory, which is concerned with the concept of values.

Values

The purpose of this chapter is to determine the concept of values and how they are significant to organisations and this thesis. The structure of this chapter is as follows: below, there will first be presented some definitions of values which illustrate how the concept can be understood.

Afterwards, there will be briefly touched upon how values in organisations are different from personal values. After that, there will be given account for how values work in an organisation, followed by an explanation of the concept of core values. Afterwards, there will be given account for Rokeach and the Value Survey, which will partly constitute the analysis of this thesis. Finally, there will be touched upon the stability of values.

Definitions of values

As with identity, there is no one accepted definition of values. However, in order to gain knowledge of how it can be understood, there will be provided some definitions below.

If consulting a dictionary such as Oxford Advanced Learners, it would define “value” as “beliefs about what is right and wrong and what is important in life.” This definition can be regarded as being quite universal and wide-ranging. While the definition is a good starting point, it would be relevant with a more narrow description that is perhaps specified to organisations as well.

Meglino and Ravlin describe values as “a person’s internalized belief about how he or she should or ought to behave.” Meglino and Ravlin’s definition deals with ethics and morals and claims that a value is an external factor that has been adopted by an individual. While they use a person as an example, it can be argued that it is possible to project the definition onto an organisation as well.

26 http://www.oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com/dictionary/value
Van Rekom, van Riel and Wierenga define values as “concepts or beliefs that pertain to desirable end states or behaviours, that transcend specific situations, and guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events.” Van Rekom et al.’s definition differs slightly from Meglino and Ravlin’s; by using the word “desirable” they make values and living up to these appear positive; in other words, living up to your values is rewarding. In addition, Meglino and Ravlin’s definition only deals with the moral aspect of values and does not touch upon the personal gain of living by the values in question.

Pruzan defines values as “the standards we will employ to measure, evaluate and report on how well we live up to our ideals.” Like Van Rekom et al.’s definition, Pruzan’s definition has a positive ring to it as well. The word “ideals” differentiates this definition from Meglino and Ravlin’s, because once again it is more than just a question of morals and ethics. In addition, it can be argued that this definition is more directed at organisations as it speaks of evaluation and reporting of behaviour.

Kabanoff, Waldersee and Cohen define values as “generalized, enduring beliefs about the personal and social desirability of modes of conducts or “end-states” of existence.” This definition also touches upon the goals of life, but despite the fact that Kabanoff et al.’s definition resembles the two prior definitions, it differs slightly. This definition not only deals with the internal level of values, but also the external level. By living up to your values you will not only experience a personal gain; it is also of significance how the public regard your values.

These are only a handful of definitions. Much research has been conducted on this area and almost any researcher has his or her own particular definition. While the wordings in these particular examples are different, the general idea behind the definitions seems to be quite alike; values are desirable beliefs that express either goals of life or how we ought or want to behave.

**Personal values and organisational values**

Generally speaking, personal values and values in organisations are very much alike; however, there is difference in the way that they are acquired.

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28 Van Rekom et al., 2006, 176.
30 Kabanoff et al., 1995, 1076.
Regarding personal values, they are often socially inherited, meaning that you internalise them while growing up. For that reason, they can be difficult to discover. Thyssen argues that “ofte har værdier den karakter, at man slutter sig til dem ud fra hvad man iagttagter, at man gør – hvilket selvfølgelig betyder, at man først giver ord til sine værdier, når de krænkes.” This shows that values can be so deeply integrated in a human being that they might not be aware of their existence until they are violated.

When it comes to organisational values, on the other hand, these are usually developed by the organisation’s top management, which is something that will be described more in detail later on in this thesis.

**Values in a collective unite**

So far it has been determined that values can both be found in individuals and organisations. However, how do individuals function in an organisation which might have values that are different from their own?

When several individuals are joined together in an organisation, they all bring their own particular values; for that reason it can be a challenging task for the top management to insist on the values of an organisation. One could ask if it is possible at all for an entire organisation, perhaps even one consisting of hundreds or thousands of individuals, to agree on or at least accept the same range of values. Pruzan argues that it is possible because values are “accepted rather than shared.” He further explains that “members of an organization accept that its leaders have the right to define the “organization’s” values, visions, etc.” In other words, while individual members of an organisation might have values that are contradicting to those of other members, it is possible for them to feel a shared sense of cohesion, simply because the organisation’s management decides for them what the values are. As long as these values do not contradict their own personal values too much, it can be argued that they can accept working in a unit that is attributed the organisation’s values.

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31 Thyssen, 1997, 129.
Meglino and Ravlin agree with this because as they argue, “when persons share similar value systems (i.e., interpersonal value congruence), they tend to perceive external stimuli in similar ways.” Put differently, when several individuals come together with a shared set of values, they will have a shared sense of community; therefore, it is possible to assemble a group of individuals with their own personal values and make an organisation function.

With that being said, one could ask how and if values are beneficial for an organisation. Aust believes that values are of major importance to an organisation. In fact, he claims that, “values are the essence of the organization,” and he further explains that values are something every organisation has. It can be argued that values are the essence because they help the organisation to define itself and its identity. The values are needed in order to give the organisation substance; to help it determine its direction in the corporate world, just as values help an individual determining what is important in life and how it wants to live its life.

Thyssen argues that values are necessary for an organisation because, “en organisation viser, hvem den er ved at markere, hvilke værdier den er sensibel for og hvordan den vægter forskellige værdikrav i sine beslutninger.” In other words, Thyssen argues that values are used in order to define the organisation’s identity; this complies with what has been discussed earlier in this thesis.

Thyssen elaborates on the importance of values as he argues that values, “... gør det muligt for den at handle mere nuanceret, dersom den kan male i hvor høj grad den lever op til værdierne.” In other words, values constitute a guideline for organisations in regard to how it should behave. In regard to employees, Thyssen also argues it will benefit the organisation if the employees are satisfied with the way it works with values; according to him, a proper set of values can be motivational for the employees to perform better and thereby lead to better results for the organisation. In other words, it is not only possible for an organisation to integrate its values in a group of employees; it will also benefit it if it manages to do it properly.

37 Ibid., 519.
38 Ibid., 135.
5 **Core values**

After having determined that values are in fact important to organisations, there will now be touched upon how values function in an organisation. Some values can be more deep-rooted in an organisation and more fundamental than others; these are referred to as core values. Van Rekom et al. explain that “values are ‘core values’ when their influence on what people do supersedes that of most other values in a value system.”[^41] In other words, the concept of values basically consists of two kinds of values; “regular” values and core values, where the latter ranks can be regarded as being more important than the regular values.[^42]

According to Thyssen, core values are a part of the organisation’s strategy and are produced through dialogue.[^43] He argues that in major organisations, core values can be a set of rules of proper behaviour both on the job and in the employee’s spare-time, and if the rules are violated it might result in threats of sanctions. He further argues that despite the fact that the employees comply with these values, they do not necessarily believe in them; he calls this pseudo-ethics.[^44]

However, even pseudo-ethics can be sufficient for an organisation, because it is a necessity for an organisation to have values; as mentioned earlier, it is important for the members of the organisation to feel a sense of cohesion in order to function as a whole. According to Aust, “an explicit, clear value system is foundational to an organization’s success.”[^45] Therefore, it can be argued that without values the organisation will have difficulties functioning properly. Also mentioned earlier, an organisation needs a functional identity in order to operate properly; one might say that the same thing applies for values; without a shared value system, the organisation will find it difficult to define itself and its standards. Thereby it will be complicated for it to define its identity because there is no real foundation for one. Aust agrees with this though, as he explains that “Related research indicates that scientist have recognized values as a means for ascertaining an organization’s identity.”[^46] In other words, by discovering an organisation’s values one is capable of determining the organisation’s identity.

[^41]: Van Rekom et al., 2006, 176.
[^42]: Ibid., 176.
[^44]: Ibid., 246.
The question is how one discovers an organisation’s values in case these are not communicated directly, for example in a “values” section on an organisation’s website. Before the time of websites, Rokeach argued that an organisation’s values are “…manifest in messages”. In other words, it is possible to locate an organisation’s values by analysing its communication, which could be everything from press releases, to its code of conduct, sustainability reviews, etc.

Seen from a marketing point of view, it is important for consumers and employees that an organisation has values and an identity, because as Cornelissen and Elving argue, they “…need to personify organizations to embody the critical notion of accountability.” In other words, it has significance for the consumers to be able to identify themselves with the organisation, with which they are involved. If they cannot see any notion of an identity or values, the organisation could just as well be any other organisation. Should that turn out to be the case, the consumer might lose interest and go someplace else to do business.

The stability of values
Another factor that should be touched upon is the stability of values. The stability of identity was discussed earlier in this thesis, where there were indications of validity in this claim. The question is if it is the same with values.

In order for an organisation to discover if there have been any changes to its values during the years, Thyssen argues that the organisation possibly keeps its values at a constant level, in order to be able to compare the differences. However, as he further argues, that would lead to obsolescence in its values because not every value is permanent. In other words, according to Thyssen, values are unstable entities that change over time. Otherwise, an organisation would not be able to keep up with time.

The claim is also supported by Meglino and Ravlin, who do not believe that values are completely stable either. However, they develop the idea even further, as they argue that values are “relatively permanent, although capable of being changed under certain conditions.” In other

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47 Ibid., 516.
words, they do not only argue that values are unstable, they claim that the period of alteration is not necessarily long.

This questions the reliability of values; if they are capable of being changed under certain conditions, would it not also be possible for an organisation to change them for their own benefit? According to Thyssen, values are in fact sometimes used for that specific purpose. One could also ask how genuine an organisation’s values might be and how one will know if they truly are genuine.

Thyssen discusses this issue and proposes a way to discover their sincerity. The method consists of three steps, which are: “1. sammenligne hvad den siger og hvad den gør og undersøge, om der er forskel mellem de erklærede og de faktiske værdier, 2. undersøge værdierne over tid for at se om der blot er tale om retoriske værdier eller om de rent faktisk bruges som præmisser, og 3. undersøge om værdierne betyder noget, eller om de altid er tabere i en konflikt mellem penge, magt og værdier.” It could be argued that this method also could be used to analyse if the values are unstable. By using the second step of the method, it will be possible to determine if the values have changed. For that reason, this step will constitute the fundamental basis of the analysis.

This sums up the primary part of the theory of values, where there has been provided overall knowledge of how values can be understood. This thesis will now move on to the more specialised part, where there will be accounted for how values can be located in the analysis later on.

**The Rokeach Value Survey**

The purpose of this section is to present the Rokeach Value Survey and give account for how it can be of use in this thesis. The reason for bringing Rokeach and his value instrument into focus is because of the fact that it provides a useful and overall knowledge of the concept of values, and in addition, it also offers an applicable instrument to locating and analysing values.

The idea of the Rokeach Value Survey was first invented by Rokeach in 1967, and in the following years Rokeach further developed it. In 1973 Rokeach provides the data of a sample survey he

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51 Ibid., 170.
conducted in 1968; the parameters which formed the basis for this survey are gender, income, education, race, age and religion. The results of this and similar studies conducted by Rokeach have lead to the Value Survey.

The Value Survey consists of two lists of values, of which the premise is that these values can be applied to every individual; the values should be regarded as dominant, which will be explained more in detail below. As mentioned, the values are divided between the two lists, where the first consists of eighteen terminal values and the other consists of eighteen instrumental values. The terminal values are concerned with end-states, or in other words, the ultimate goals in life, and the instrumental values are concerned with daily behaviours; they can also be described as means of reaching the terminal values.

According to Aust, who is an advocate for the theory, the "Value Theory is based on five assumptions: (a) people have relatively few values (i.e., especially fewer than beliefs), (b) humans possess the same number of values, but to different degrees, (c) values form value-systems, (d) values are rooted in culture, society, and institutions (or organizations), and (e) values are manifest in messages and therefore are able to be examined."\(^{53}\)

As mentioned above, one should keep in mind that the two lists of values should be regarded as dominant values, as Aust also touches upon in the second assumption; Aust explains that the Value Survey presupposes that every individual has the same number of values, but there might be variation in how these values are internalised in individuals. Rokeach started out with several hundred values and narrowed them down to the final thirty six that constitute the Value Survey. In other words, there are many other values than just these; the two lists of values were merely the most frequently mentioned ones in his studies and for that reason, Rokeach argues that they can be considered dominant values. Many have tried to reduce the number of values, for example by Johnson,\(^{54}\) but up until now there have been no successful attempts at doing so.

Aust also mentions another presupposition of the Value Survey, which is that values are rooted in culture and the social heritage; this was touched upon briefly earlier in this section, but Aust explains that the values are also rooted in institutions and organisations. For that reason, it can be

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\(^{53}\) Aust, 2004, 522.

\(^{54}\) Johnston, 1995
argued that it is possible to locate the values of the Value Survey in organisations as well. In the analysis there will be focus on trying to determine if there is validity to this claim.

First, however, this thesis will return to the two lists of values. They are listed as follows:

The eighteen terminal values are: comfortable life, exciting life, sense of accomplishment, world at peace, world of beauty, equality, family security, freedom, happiness, inner harmony, mature love, national security, pleasure, salvation, self-respect, social recognition, true friendship and wisdom.

The eighteen instrumental values are: ambition, broadmindedness, capability, cheerfulness, cleanliness, courage, forgiveness, helpfulness, honesty, imagination, independence, intellect, logic, love, obedience, politeness, responsibility and self-control.

According to Rokeach, these values can be regarded as universally dominant. As already mentioned, there are cultural aspects to take into consideration; even in developed countries there can be major differences between countries and individuals. However, one might claim that values like helpfulness, love and responsibility are so deep-rooted in mankind, because they have been human attributions for centuries; for that reason, it can be argued that these values can be regarded as universal values. There are other values on the list, however, which are not an obvious part of life for many individuals. A value like “salvation” is closely connected to religion, which does not have the same importance to people like it had in the 1960s, at least not in many European countries. For that reason, it could be discussed if it still can be considered a universal value.

With that being said, Rokeach claims that these values can be regarded as dominant in every individual, however, how well does this theory apply to organisations? The second presupposition of the Value Survey claims that values are rooted in organisations, too, so one could argue that it would be obvious that the same values could be discovered in an organisation’s communication. This will be one of the focus points of the analysis later on this thesis.

So far it can be determined that values are rooted not only in culture but also in organisations. For that reason it can be argued that values are not just attributed to individuals but also to
organisations. However, whether these values can be located in BP’s communication as well will be determined later on in the analysis.

**Criticism of the Rokeach Value Survey**

There are some points of criticism of the Value Survey, which must be dealt with before this thesis will move on to the next chapter. Some theorists are not satisfied with the value instrument as it is at this moment and these will be accounted for below.

According to Johnson, the Rokeach Value System has an underlying subset of values. He conducted a study with the purpose of discovering if such underlying structure existed and how this was illustrated.\(^{55}\) The results of this study suggested that there was in fact an underlying structure in the Value Survey; the structure consists of two dimensions that were quite similar to Hofstede’s individualism-collectivism continuum.\(^{56}\) In addition, as mentioned above, Johnson has attempted to reduce the number of values as he claimed this was possible.

Gibbins and Walker are also critiques of the Value Survey, as they claim that Rokeach’s theory is insufficient and needs adjustment.\(^{57}\) They have several points of criticism; they criticise Rokeach’s view on the difference between wisdom and education; they argue that these two values need to be revised, because they can both be terminal as well as instrumental values. They further argue that there is disagreement about the interpretations of each value.\(^{58}\) They argue that each value does not necessarily bear the same meaning to everybody; their own study supports this claim. In fact, they found that several values had both negative and positive interpretations, which means that the values have contradictory meanings.\(^{59}\) Generally, they argue that Rokeach’s theory is outdated and needs reconceptualising.

Another of Gibbins and Walker’s points of critique is that the Value Survey is too easily accessible. They argue that “in a few minutes, an investigator can obtain the most fundamental information about someone’s basic values,”\(^{60}\) when using the value instrument. However, when the meaning

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\(^{55}\) Johnson, 1995, 584.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 592.
\(^{57}\) Gibbins and Walker, 2001, 804.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 798.
\(^{59}\) Gibbins and Walker, 2001, 801.
\(^{60}\) Ibid., 797.
of each value is ambiguous, it questions the reliability of the results. For that reason the results of any study conducted with the aid of the Value Survey are possibly ambiguous as well.

Finally, in 1985, Braithwaite and Law proposed an alternative value instrument based on Rokeach’s theory. They believed in the usefulness of the Value Survey, but claimed that it had certain weaknesses; for example, they argued that it should contain values like “care-freeness” and “thriftiness”.\(^\text{61}\) For that reason, they developed their own instrument, “Goal and Social Values Inventories Index”, which contained the aforementioned values. This value instrument will not be included in this thesis, however, as it would be too wide-ranging with two instruments.

The criticism shows that Rokeach’s Value Survey is not completely flawless and would perhaps benefit from a modification. However, despite the criticism it can be argued that it provides a sufficient fundamental basis for the comparative analysis of values in this thesis.

**Conclusion**

This section concludes on what has been written about values. In this section there was first presented a number of definitions of values by different researchers in order to provide knowledge of how the concept of values can be regarded. Following that, there was briefly accounted for the difference between personal values and organisational values. It was concluded that there were differences in the way values was integrated in individuals and organisations respectively. Furthermore, there was touched upon the stability of values and core values. Following that there was accounted for the Rokeach Value Survey, on which a large part of this thesis’ analysis will be based. There was also given account for the criticism of Rokeach’s theory; the general criticism was that the theory was not thoroughly developed.

After having accounted for the theory of values, I will now turn to the final part of the theory chapter, which will deal with the theory of crisis.

**Crisis theory**

In order to determine if BP’s values and identity have changed during the period of crisis, it is necessary to analyse BP’s communication before, during and after the crisis. However, in order to do so, it is first necessary to acquire knowledge of the term crisis and how it is structured.

\(^{61}\) Braithwaite and Law, 185, 250.
Therefore, the following section will provide a definition of crisis and explain the various stages of a crisis.

Crisis definitions

Crisis is a complex phenomenon as there are no one accepted definition of the term. There is generally disagreement of how to define the term but also what actually constitutes a crisis. Some argue that the effects of a crisis can only be negative, while others claim that there is possibility for a positive outcome of a crisis.

One of the latter is Stephen Fink, who argues that a crisis is “a turning point for better or worse.”\(^{62}\) This is rather consistent with the theory of Timothy Coombs, who defines a crisis as “an unpredictable, major threat that can have a negative effect on the organization, industry, or stakeholders if handled improperly.”\(^{63}\) In other words, Coombs argues that if a crisis is handled properly, it is possible to prevent negative outcomes of the crisis from damaging the organisation.

However, there seems to be a majority of theorists believing in a non-positive outcome, while others do not state clearly how they regard this question. For example, Cornelissen argues that “when organizations do not deal with issues in a timely or responsible manner or when stakeholders or the general public feel that an organization has not adequately responded to an issue, a crisis situation may emerge.”\(^{64}\) He does not touch upon how a crisis might affect the organisation, only what makes a crisis occur.

With that being said, it can be concluded that a crisis entails an abnormal situation which can affect the organisation negatively, if it does not respond to it properly and in time. When a crisis occurs, the organisation’s image and reputation are at risk and in consequence the stakeholders’ image and reputation are at risk as well. Therefore, it is crucial that the organisation always bears this in mind when communicating about the crisis.

Crisis Management

After having defined what a crisis is, there will now be accounted for how a crisis might occur and how to deal with it. As Cornelissen argued in his definition, a crisis emerges if an issue is not

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\(^{62}\) Johansen and Frandsen, 2007, 73.
\(^{63}\) Coombs, 2006, 2.
\(^{64}\) Cornelissen, 2009, 224.
tended to in time. In other words, a crisis is not necessarily triggered by a large accidents; even a small incident can evolve into a crisis. It is not possible to tell exactly when it will occur but as Coombs argues, “a crisis is unpredictable but not unexpected.”65 In other words, it is not possible to tell when a crisis will emerge but thinking that it will not hit your organisation is hazardous; even the most prepared organisation is at risk of facing a crisis at some point.

However, despite the fact that a crisis cannot be predicted, preparing for the worst-case scenario is not futile. Preparing for a crisis might not necessarily diminish the severity of the crisis, depending on what type of crisis it is, of course. However, a thorough crisis management plan will decrease the amount of work which the organisation needs to do regarding communicating with its stakeholders and the media. If the organisation has a plan ready, it will be able to contact their stakeholders and publish a press release rather quickly, which, as a result, might reduce the risk of having the organisation’s image damaged as well as the stakeholder’s and their mutual relationship. Should this happen, however, one might risk of facing yet another crisis because caring for your stakeholders is the number one priority, especially in a time of crisis.

Stages of crisis

After having briefly touched upon how a crisis can emerge, there will now be accounted for the stages of a crisis and how the organisation should communicate in each stage.

According to Coombs, a crisis situation can be divided into three stages; precrisis, crisis event and postcrisis.66 These will be accounted for in detail below. As mentioned above, it is important for an organisation to communicate with their stakeholders throughout every one of these stages, in order to manage the crisis properly.

Pre-crisis

The first stage, which is called precrisis, takes place before the actual crisis has emerged. As mentioned earlier, proper crisis management includes preparing for a crisis, even though the thought of one hitting does not seem likely. Heath and Millar argue that “preparation can entail at least two key functions: looking for and reducing the likelihood that a crisis will occur...”67 In other

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65 Coombs, 2007, 3.
66 Ibid., 17.
words, by monitoring developments and activities around the organisation and dealing in time
with issues that might occur, is basic preparation.

Other ways of preparing for a crisis could be to consider how to communicate when the crisis hits.
In other words, the organisation needs to consider who to communicate with and when. It is also
necessary to consider the content of its potential communication; Heath argues that “responses to
the crisis must be centered on the identity of the organization and framed in terms of the social
construction of the event.” For that reason, the organisation needs to draw on its knowledge of
its values and identity when developing its crisis communication. If the organisation does not
seem sincere, the stakeholders and the media will most likely find the organisation untrustworthy
which will result in unsuccessful communication.

Borda and Mackey-Kallis agree with Coombs on the steps that need to be taken in the pre-crisis
stage. They argue that the plan should include preparing a crisis management team, which will be
responsible for creating a message action plan; this plan will contain all possible information
needed during a crisis situation. Furthermore, the plan should be tested in order to ensure its
efficiency as they argue that there is always room for improvement.

Crisis event
In this stage, the crisis has emerged and the organisation’s image is now at risk. During the crisis
event, it is absolutely necessary that the organisation focuses on communicating with its
stakeholders and keeps providing them with updates on the developments of the crisis and the
organisation’s actions. The organisation’s relationships with its stakeholders are at risk, along with
both its own and the stakeholders’ reputation and it is important that these are protected.

Borda and Mackey-Kallis recommend that the organisation gathers all relevant information and
selects a spokesperson that will be the organisation’s consistent public image. Several
spokespersons will cause confusion because the media will not know who to turn to. When
communicating with the stakeholders and the media, the organisation should “disclose all
information, tell the truth, put yourself in the other party’s shoes, show concern.” Finally, it is

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68 Heath in Heath and Millar, 2004, 150.
69 Borda and Mackey-Kallis in Heath and Millar, 2004, 120.
70 Borda and Mackey-Kallis in Heath and Millar, 2004, 120.
important that the message gets out quickly and that the organisation is assertive when communicating with the media.\textsuperscript{71} In other words, it is now possible to locate the values and identity, which the organisation prepared in the pre-crisis stage.

\textit{Post-crisis}

In this stage, the crisis has finally reached a conclusion. It is important, however, that the organisation does not return to old habits and forget that the crisis has happened. There are now new necessities, which have to be taken care of and these must be tended to and reviewed regularly in order to constantly be prepared for a new crisis to emerge.

According to Borda and Mackey-Kallis, the steps that need to be taken after the crisis is, first of all, evaluating the crisis management plan and its effectiveness; it needs to be determined if the plan needs adjustment in case another crisis should emerge. If there were any flaws in the plan, they should be corrected. Furthermore, the organisation should be prepared for continued media coverage; the crisis is over, but there might still be questions unanswered.\textsuperscript{72}

In addition, Heath and Millar explain that the post-crisis process “\textit{entails providing information that demonstrates how, why, and when the organization has put things right as well as what it plans to do to prevent the recurrence of a similar crisis.}”\textsuperscript{73} In other words, even though the organisation has managed the crisis, it needs to keep updating the public of their actions and initiatives in connection to the crisis. It is essential that it learns from past experiences and uses them for preparation in case of another unexpected problematic situation, and it is necessary that the public is aware of this.

\textbf{Conclusion}

To sum up this section, a crisis is not just a serious problem that threatens the organisation; the crisis can be divided into three stages, which all needs to be focused on. It has been discovered that if an organisation has a crisis management plan prepared, it is possible to reduce the damage to both its stakeholders’ image as well as its own. With a crisis management plan, the organisation is ready to respond when the unexpected occurs.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Heath and Millar, 2004, 8.
What has also been discovered is that an organisation ought to incorporate its values and identity in the crisis management plan. Therefore, by analysing the organisation’s communication published during a crisis, one should be able to discover the organisation’s identity and core values. In other words, by analysing BP’s communication it will be possible to not only locate their values but also determine if they change during the crisis.

However, it could be argued that if the organisation sticks to the crisis management plan, it could be possible to maintain its values and identity during a crisis. This will be determined later on in this thesis.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to account for the three areas of theory which should constitute the fundamental basis of this thesis. The first section, which gave account for the concept of identity, provided two diagrams of how identity can be approached. These diagrams will be used to locate BP’s identity. Following that, there was given account for the concept of values where the primary focus was on the Rokeach Value Survey; this value instrument will be used to determine BP’s values and if they have changed during the crisis. Finally, there was touched upon the concept of crisis and how it was organised into three stages.

After having given account for the theory, there is now a fundamental basis for conducting the analysis, which will provide the results needed for answering the problem statement of this thesis.

**Analysis**

This chapter focuses on the analysis of BP’s communication. The aim of the analysis is to examine how BP’s values are manifested in their communication, and by looking at the results from the communication during and after the crisis respectively, it will be possible to determine if BP’s values have changed.

The analysis concentrates on several texts and the structure of this chapter is as follows; first, there will be accounted for the code of conduct, where there will be an analysis of the values implemented in the text. Thereafter, the sustainability review from 2009 will be examined; there
will be used the same approach as the one used for the preceding text. Finally, there will be an analysis of the press releases, which were published during and after the crisis.

Because the code of conduct, the sustainability review and the press releases all belong to different genres, it is not possible to make a proper comparison. Only the press releases can be compared accurately because they are of the same genre. However, the code of conduct and sustainability review will be able support the values expressed before the crisis emerged.

**Code of Conduct**

BP’s code of conduct is a 70 page-long text, which is directed at new employees at BP. Its primary function is to work as a helpful guideline to proper behaviour for new employees both while working for BP and after the employment has ended. Furthermore, it provides examples on how to deal with complex business situations and proper response options to said situations. The conduct covers five different sections: health, safety, security and the environment; employees; business partners; governments and communities; and company assets and financial integrity.\(^{74}\)

The code of conduct starts out with a message from BP’s now former Group Chief Executive, Tony Hayward, who states that “the code is based on our beliefs and values. It enshrines our commitment to honesty and integrity, our desire to contribute to human progress and our commitment to mutual advantage in every relationship of which we are part.”\(^{75}\) In other words, it has been made clear that it is possible to locate BP’s values in the code of conduct. Hayward’s statement also offers some significant words that could be interpreted as values; for example, Hayward mentions “commitment”, “honesty and integrity” and “human progress”, which are all positively loaded words and they could easily constitute some of BP’s values; especially “integrity” and “honesty” which will be repeated numerous times further on in the conduct.

After Hayward’s message, follows the actual code of conduct. As mentioned earlier, the text is divided into five sections, the first one being “Health, safety, security and the environment”. In this section, they state that “We are committed to the protection of the natural environment, to the safety of the communities in which we operate, and to the health, safety and security of our

\(^{74}\) Appendix 2, 29.
\(^{75}\) Appendix 1, 1.
The words that are of particular interest here are “safety”, “environment” and “health”. In this context “safety” and “health” are directed at both personnel and local communities in which BP operate, meaning that no accidents or damage must happen to either employees or the communities.

It could be argued that these values should be fundamental to every organisation, especially the ones that are operating in risky businesses, like BP do. The text indicates that BP are very committed to safety as they state that it is not enough to just obey the safety rules; being alert to safety risks is a necessity, especially in the business BP are in. When having departments all over the globe and potentially dangerous job positions, where accidents are prone to happen at some point, it is crucial that safety is among their most prioritised values.

Finally, the last keyword mentioned in the quotation is “environment”, and a small section is dedicated to this particular area. It could be argued that caring for the environment is a necessity when being an oil company, where risks of accidents leading to environmental pollution are looming every day. BP agree with this as they state that “wherever we operate, we will strive to minimize any damage to the environment arising from our activities.” This quotation indicates that the environment is of great importance to the organisation and it can be argued that it can be placed among BP’s most important values. Furthermore, it is demanded of organisations like BP to live up to certain rules and laws in order to protect the environment. For that reason one might say that it would be profoundly unethical of BP, if the environment was not a part their primary interest.

The second section in the code of conduct is “Employees”. As with the environment, it is important for an organisation like BP, who employs several thousands of people that issues like respect and diversity is in constant focus. This seems in fact to be the case, which can be seen in the following quotation: “BP aspires to create a work environment of mutual trust and respect, in which diversity and inclusion are valued...” The keywords here are trust, respect, diversity and inclusion. These words are mentioned several times in this section and for that reason, it can be

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76 Appendix 1, 12.
77 Ibid., 15.
78 Ibid., 16.
79 Appendix 1, 20.
argued that these can regarded as values. One could argue that mentioning these words as part of BP’s values is stating the obvious; when employing so many people it is crucial that there are clear and comprehensible rules. Because BP have departments all over the world, it is not possible for the top management to monitor everybody; for that reason it is important that there are general rules for behaviour – both for the average worker and the executives.

The third section in the conduct is “Business Partners”. For a global organisation like BP, there are many aspects that need to be considered when dealing with partners, suppliers, etc. In order to be in a successful business relationship there are many considerations that need to be taken into account.

As BP state, “at BP, we believe that business relationships founded on trust and mutual advantage – where both sides benefit – are vital to our success.”\(^{80}\) In other words, a business relationship is a two-way relationship; if only one part gains something, the relationship is unsuccessful. However, there are other aspects that need to be taken into consideration. For BP it is important that their business partners, suppliers, etc, act in consistence with BP’s ethic requirements.\(^{81}\) If the behaviour of the business partners contradicts the behaviour of BP, it might result in stakeholders, employees, etc, questioning BP’s ethics. In other words, if BP are involved with questionable characters, it will raise concern about their intentions which might harm the organisation. This makes “trust” a key value.

In the fourth section, which is called “Governments and communities”, BP state that “we will work towards improvements that are measurable and contribute to the real, independent growth of communities where we operate.”\(^{82}\) The words of interest here are especially “improvements” and “growth”, because they signal that BP are focusing on progress; not just as an organisation, but also in the communities where they operate. This indicates that the cooperation should be beneficial for both parts.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^{81}\) Ibid., 44.
\(^{82}\) Ibid., 46.
BP also exclaim that “being transparent in our communications about our performance (whether good or bad) increases trust in our activities, and makes others wish to do business with us.” What is important in this quotation is the word “transparent” which correlates to the much repeated word “honesty”. BP acknowledge the importance of transparency because it leads to trust and more business; in fact, it is a necessity if they wish to succeed on a long-term scale. For that reason it can be argued that “transparency” is among BP’s values as well.

The fifth and final section is “Company assets and financial integrity”. BP state that “we will be forthright and transparent about our operations and performance, accurate in the recording and reporting of data and results, and exercise care in the use of our assets and resources.” Once again “Transparency” is mentioned which only emphasises its significance. When it comes to accounting, it is crucial that the organisation is completely accurate, especially when it comes to finances, because any inaccurate reporting might damage BP’s credibility; not to mention the fact that if the act was done deliberately, it would be regarded as fraud. For that reason, “transparency”, or honesty in general, is a significant value.

**Conclusion**

This section will sum up the results from the Code of Conduct. The analysis focused on the five parts, which the conduct was divided into, where each part presented an area which had major significance to BP.

In the analysis there were located a number of words which were repeated frequently and therefore could be regarded as values. The words were as follows: diversity, environment, honesty, integrity, responsibility, respect, safety, transparency and trust. The results will be discussed later on. Now, this thesis will turn to the sustainability review.

**Sustainability Review 2009**

The Sustainability Review 2009 is a 37-page-long document describing the top non-financial issues that are relevant to BP’s operations. Among these issues are sustainability, environment,

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83 Appendix 1, 50.
84 Ibid., 56.
85 Appendix 10.
employees and local communities. In addition, the review accounts for some of BP’s initiatives and partnerships that are relevant to the aforementioned issues.

The structure of the review is a bit different from that of the code of conduct; the document starts off with the Group Chief Executive’s review, then moves on to explaining BP’s accomplishments in 2009. The primary body of the review is organised into various sections dealing with different kinds of energy. The review ends of with contact details and where to obtain more information.

The second introductory page to the review is dedicated to describing BP’s values and corporate strategies. The words, which BP describe themselves with, are: “progressive, responsible, innovative and performance driven.” These values establish the framework for this document and are mentioned several times throughout the text, implied or directly. There will be given examples of this later on in the analysis.

The first pages of the review itself present an interview of BP’s Group Chief Executive Tony Hayward. The interview focuses on sustainability-related issues and offers answers to some of the most frequently asked questions on this matter. Furthermore, Hayward conveys some of BP’s primary values, which are also used as the title of the interview; “Diverse, innovative and efficient”.

These values are repeated several times throughout the interview. For example, Hayward claims that holding the position as market leader is not the only objective for BP; the road to market leadership should be paved with more than good intentions. As he states, “my goal is that BP should not only be a leader in what we do – by achieving excellent financial and operational results – but also in how we do it, because the ‘how’ is central to building the trust and accountability needed for long-term success.” In other words, doing the right thing is a necessity for BP if they want to succeed in the long run. In addition, this quotation bears mark of the previously mentioned values; the goal of market leadership corresponds to “performance driven”, and trust and accountability correspond to “responsible”.

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86 Appendix 2, ii.
87 Ibid., 2.
88 Ibid., 3.
Moving on to the primary part of the review, there will now be accounted for the section “Diverse and affordable energy.” As sustainability and environment constitute this document, it is evident that BP’s emphasis of the importance of the environment and in that context, how to utilise energy efficiency, is repeated several times: “In BP we require all our businesses to pursue energy efficiency and we also help our customers achieve greater efficiency.” In addition, this quotation shows how BP strive to be environmental even in an outer segment, by helping their customers becoming more environmental in regard to their energy consumption. Whether they are trying to influence their customers’ energy habits for the sake of the environment or simply because of the signalling effect can be discussed.

In the next section which is called “Low-carbon energy”, BP state that they “…support a range of research and development projects…” This corresponds to the values “progressive” and “innovative”, which were mentioned earlier, because by showing interest in and supporting research, they signal that they wish to improve their methods and technologies. This also comes to show in the following quotation: “We aim to play a leading role in the growing low-carbon energy sector…” In order to play a leading role, it is necessary for BP to distinguish themselves from other organisation, for example by doing research and developing their technologies.

In the next section, “Safe and responsible energy”, Damien Stead, who is Operations support lead, states that “our goal of ‘no accidents, no harm to people and no damage to the environment’ is fundamental to BP’s activities.” This corresponds to BP’s values of “safety” and “environment” which were discovered in the code of conduct earlier. It can be argued that the repeated “no” emphasises the significance of these values. As BP state, “safety, people and performance are BP’s top priorities.” For that reason, it can be concluded that “safety” and “performance” belong to BP’s values. “Environment” also belongs to BP’s values because as BP exclaim, “working sensitively around flora and fauna is an integral part of our effort to manage environmental impacts”.

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89 Appendix 2, 10.
90 Ibid., 17.
91 Ibid., 16.
92 Ibid., 20.
93 Ibid., 21.
94 Appendix 2, 24.
mentioned earlier it is crucial for an organisation like BP to protect the environment as far as possible.

The next section is called “People energy” which deals with employees and their performances. One of the topics that is of great significance to BP in this section is equal rights and respect among their employees. They argue that they “... are committed to creating a work environment where diversity and inclusion are valued and where everyone is treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and without discrimination.”\(^{95}\) Being a large and global organisation as BP with numerous departments all over the globe requires great focus on human rights; it is especially crucial in particular areas of the world where diversity and equality are not as developed and respected as in the Western world. Of course, it is important that BP respect the cultural differences, however, it is just as important that they stay true to their values in order to signal integrity towards their employees, stakeholders and the media.

The final section is called “Local energy” and deals with the communities in which BP are working. One of the topics in this section is education, which BP find important. They state that “education is a critical driver of progress and opportunity in developing and developed countries alike.”\(^{96}\) It links with “progress” which was determined as one of BP’s values earlier on. “Education” is crucial in order for BP’s employees to improve their skills and knowledge. It is in BP’s best interest to employ the most qualified people and for that reason, education is necessary.

“We strive to make that impact a positive one by running our operations responsibly and by investing in the community in ways that benefit both local people and BP.”\(^{97}\) In this quotation BP once again mention “responsibly”, however, the last part of the sentence is also interesting; by investing in a community they will benefit from it in the long run. When the community develops and begins to perform better, it will be an advantage to not only the community but also BP.

**Conclusion**

This section will sum up the results of the analysis of the Sustainability Review 2009. Some of the most repeated words are, for example: accountability, dignity, diverse, efficiency, environment,

\(^{95}\) Ibid., 28.  
\(^{96}\) Ibid., 31.  
\(^{97}\) Ibid., 31.
Respect, safety, trust. Some of the values are repetitions from the code of conduct, such as safety and trust, which only emphasises their significance.

Press releases
This section of the analysis will be dealing with BP’s press releases. For the sake of clarity, the press releases have been divided into two sections, where the first one will be dealing with the press releases from the beginning and during the crisis, and the second one will be dealing with press releases published after the crisis. It should also be mentioned that the press releases used for this analysis will only be those that are published in connection with the oil spill or has obvious relevance to it; therefore, every other press release that BP might have published will be disregarded.

Because the crisis can be considered to still be in progress, I have decided to regard press releases published after the final closing of the well as being post-crisis.

It should also be mentioned that because BP have published press releases at an almost daily basis since the oil spill, I have chosen only to use a number of them, in order to prevent the analysis from being too long and confused.

During the crisis

Appendix 3, “BP Initiates Response to Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill”, 22/04-10
This press release was BP’s first response to the actual oil spill. Previous press releases have only dealt with the explosion on the oil rig. This release contains information about the incident so far and the resources they have at their disposal to deal with the situation.

In addition, it also contains a statement from Tony Hayward, BP’s Group Chief Executive, who exclaims that BP “... are determined to do everything in our power to contain this oil spill and resolve the situation as rapidly, safely and effectively as possible.” The words that are interesting here are “safely” and effectively”. These are words that were used frequently in the code of conduct and the sustainability review and therefore, they are particularly significant.

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98 Appendix 3.
Appendix 4, “BP Offers Sympathy To The Families Of Those Lost In The US Oil Rig Fire”, 24/04-10
As the title says, this press release is a response to the deaths of the eleven oil rig workers, who were killed in fire on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig. Once again Tony Hayward presents a statement, where he expresses his “…deepest sympathies…” This corresponds to the value “care”, which has been mentioned earlier in the code of conduct, particularly. He also states that BP “…owe a lot to everyone who works on offshore facilities around the world…” It could be argued that this quotation signals “responsibility” in the way that those who work on the offshore facilities are potentially exposed to danger; however, their work is necessary in order for BP to exist and for that reason, BP are responsible for their safety.

Appendix 5, “BP Reiterates Oil Spill Response Transparency”, 21/05-10
This press release was published a month after the accident, which deals with BP’s wish to be open and transparent about everything they do. The first keyword can be seen in the title, which is “transparency”. Another word, which is repeated several times in the release, is “commitment”. Both words were highly used in the code of conduct and the sustainability review. Because BP continue to incorporate these values in their press releases, they can be regarded as being very important to the organisation. Another word, which was also mentioned several times in the two first texts, is “effectiveness”. By choosing this word BP emphasise that the work, which needs to be done, will be done effectively and thoroughly. The result of this might lead to a decrease of the damage done to BP’s reputation.

Appendix 6, “BP Announces New Gulf Coast Restoration Organization”, 23/06-10
Two months after the accident this press release was published. It explains how BP have announced a new organisation which will deal with all aspects of the response to the crisis. The words of interest in this text are “efficiency”, “effectiveness”, “commitment” and “sustainable”. These are all words that have been mentioned previously. This press release shows that commitment is important to BP, which can be seen in the following quotation: “Our

99 Appendix 4.
100 Ibid.
commitment to the Gulf States is for the long-term.\textsuperscript{101} It could be argued that this quotation also signals “responsibility”, because BP promise to make things right, no matter how long time it might take for them to clean up the Gulf.

BP argue that the new organisation will be “permanent sustainable”, \textsuperscript{102} which signals that even in the time of crisis, they are devoted to sustainability; of course, it could be argued that they, of all organisations, ought to care about the environment and sustainability at this point.

\textit{Appendix 7, “BP Hires James Lee Witt to Advise and Support Response Effort”, 30/07-10}

In this press release BP touch upon many of the previous mentioned values. Particularly “commitment” is located several times. However, there are also other keywords that are of interest. For example, BP mention that “we are committed to restoring communities and the environment.”\textsuperscript{103} This quotation contains both “committed”, “communities” and “environment”, where especially the later two were of major importance in the sustainability review. By mentioning the communities and the environment, BP display responsibility and ensures that aforementioned will not be forgotten in the chaos of the crisis.

\textit{Appendix 8, “BP Releases Report on Causes of Gulf of Mexico Tragedy”, 08/09-10}

In this press release BP account for a new report, which explains the causes of the Deepwater Horizon accident in April into detail. First of all, BP list the reason behind the accident, but the press release also contains comments from both Tony Hayward and BP’s incoming Chief Executive Bob Dudley, who for example explains that “it will be incumbent in everyone at BP to embrace and implement the changes necessary to ensure that a tragedy like this can never happen again.”\textsuperscript{104} This quotation signals responsibility because BP show willingness to adaption to prevent similar situations from occurring again. Furthermore, it can also signal the value “safety”, because the safety measures are going to change.

In addition to what could be interpreted from the preceding quotation, the word “safety” could also be located in the press release twice. The same goes for the word “responsibility”, which was

\textsuperscript{101} Appendix 6.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Appendix 7.
\textsuperscript{104} Appendix 8.
mentioned twice in the text as well. Furthermore, BP also mention the words “communities” and “environment”.

**After the crisis**

*Appendix 9, “Statement by BP America on Completion of MC252 Relief Well”, 19/09-10*

This press release contains a short statement from BP after the relief well finally has been sealed. Despite that the well has been dealt with, BP ensure that they will not abandon their obligations. For example, they state that “*BP remains committed to remedying the harm...*”\(^{105}\) This quotation signifies that “committed” is a continuously important value to BP. Another word which should be mentioned is “remediyy”\(^{105}\); choosing this particular word signals responsibility; BP want to make things right. Finally, BP state that they will continue sharing their knowledge,\(^{106}\) which can be interpreted as “transparency”.

*Appendix 10, “Dudley Sets Up New Safety and Risk Unit and Signals Sweeping Changes at BP”, 29/09-10*

As the title says, the content of this press release focuses on BP’s new initiatives on the safety area. A new division has been created which goes under the name of the Safety and Operational Risk function. This new initiative reveals BP’s increased focus on safety, and from this it can be argued that this value will most likely continue being among BP’s most important values. As the incoming Group Chief Executive, Bob Dudley, exclaims, “*the changes are in areas where I believe we most clearly need to act, with safety and risk management as top priority.*”\(^{107}\) In other words, “safety” will not decrease in importance and even during operations where risk might not be involved, “safety” will be top priority.

Another value that is put emphasis on in this press release is “trust”. As Dudley states, “*these are the first and most urgent steps in a programme I am putting in place to rebuild trust in BP – the trust of our customers, of governments, of our employees and of the world at large.*”\(^{108}\) By mentioning the customers, governments and their employees, Dudley emphasises how significant they are to the organisation but it also shows that BP are determined to regain the trust of all

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\(^{105}\) Appendix 9.

\(^{106}\) Ibid.

\(^{107}\) Appendix 10.

\(^{108}\) Ibid.
these groups. It could be argued that Dudley would not have mentioned all these groups if they were not important to BP. Other values that are mentioned are “development”, “accountability”. These are not emphasised on in the press release but they are still significant because of the major emphasis on them in the previous texts.

Conclusion

This sums up the analysis of the press releases. The following words were of high occurrence in the press releases: commitment, community, effectiveness, efficiency, environment, responsibility, safety, sustainable and transparency.

Comparing the Results

The purpose of this chapter is to compare the results of the analysis in order to determine if BP’s values have changed since the beginning of the crisis. The structure of this section will consist of a presentation of the results of the analyses of the code of conduct and the sustainability review, and following that, the comparison of the results of the press releases. As previously mentioned, the results of the code of conduct and sustainability review cannot figure directly in the comparison because they belong to other text genres, however, they can support the results of the press releases that were published at the beginning of the crisis. The results of these are presented below:

Results of the code of conduct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>36</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The chart shows that three values are mentioned particularly often; these are “commitment”, “responsibility” and “safety”. Values like “honesty” and “transparency” were not located that many times in the text; the reason for this could be that these values are more significant in connection with exterior aspects, such as communication with the media. This text is directed to
internal recipients, the employees. For that reason, there is no need for emphasising values like these.

**Results of the sustainability review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Trust</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sustainability review focuses particularly on four values, which are “efficiency”, “environment”, “safety” and “sustainability”. It can be argued that because we are dealing with a sustainability review, there is clear coherency with the results and the text. Values like “respect” and “trust” were not located that often; the reason for this could be that the main focus of this text is not on human attributions; these were accounted for in the code of conduct.

**Results of the press releases**

After having accounted for the code of conduct and sustainability review, the results for the press releases will now be dealt with. Below follows first a chart showing the values mentioned in the press releases published during the crisis and the number of times they were located, and thereafter follows another chart showing the values found in the press releases published after the crisis and the number of times they were mentioned.

**Results of the press releases from during the crisis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Care</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Determination</th>
<th>Sustainable</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen on the chart, only two values truly stick out from the crowd, which are “commitment” and “effectiveness”. The remaining values are on a low and fairly even level. “Experience”, “responsibility” and “transparency” also rank somewhat high on the list, but compared to “commitment” they are not as important.

**Results of the post-crisis press releases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>First Chart</th>
<th>Second Chart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to the first chart, the values discovered in the press releases after the crisis do not have any particular high-jumpers; only “safety” and “trust” rank somewhat high. The rest of the values were only located once or twice. As will be discussed more in detail later on, the low amount of values can be a result of a fewer number of press releases compared to how many that were published in the first period.

**Comparison**

When comparing the two charts, there are some obvious differences. Some of these differences can be seen in the way that some of the values appear in both charts, but the number of occurrences differs remarkably in each chart respectively. For example, the first chart shows that “commitment” was located fourteen times in the press releases during the crisis period, but the second chart shows that it was only located twice in the post-crisis period. Another difference can be seen with the value “trust”, which was located six times in the second chart, but in the first chart it was not located at all. The same tendency goes for the rest of the values; only the ones with low scores do not differ remarkably.

The explanation for these discrepancies could be that BP are changing their focus; after the worst part of the crisis is over, there are other matters BP need to tend to, such as regaining the trust of their shareholders. During the crisis it was necessary for them to convince the public that they were committed to handling the situation, and the fact that they do not mention it nearly as often
in their more recent press releases could be interpreted as if they believe that they have proved their commitment to the public.

The fact that many of the values from the first chart reappear in the second chart could infer that BP have not disregarded these values; they are still significant but BP need to shift focus.

It should be mentioned, though, that the comparison cannot be considered completely accurate because there are far less press releases from after the crisis compared to the ones published during the crisis. This lack of balance leads to a dubious result. In order to conduct a more equal analysis, it would require more post-crisis press releases; for that reason, a more precise result would be achieved if more time had passed, before the analysis was conducted. However, hopefully it would be possible for the analysis to show some sort of tendency that could be of use for further research.

**Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the analyses of BP’s communication. It was determined that most of the values discovered in the code of conduct and sustainability review could be located in both press releases. However, it was found that there was an overall inconsistency between the results of the two groups of press releases, despite the fact that some values were located in both groups. Each group had one or two values which were located more often than the other values. These two groups’ values were not identical which could indicate that there has been a shift of focus and priorities. How this should be regarded will be discussed in the next chapter.

**Discussion**

This section is dedicated to the discussion of the results of the analysis. The purpose is to put the results into perspective and discuss how the results are relevant to the field of values and identity, plus what relevance they might have to BP.

First, there will be accounted for some of the factors, which might have been influential on the results of the analysis. Afterwards, there will be a comparison of the values from during and after the crisis, and the result of this will be discussed. Afterwards, I will discuss the effect the results might have on Rokeach’s Value Survey and if the value instrument is applicable to organisations at
all. Following this, I will discuss how the results might affect the theory of the instability of values. There will also be a discussion of identity and which of the selected theories is most useful in determining BP’s identity and in addition, by using the values found in the analysis, I will try determining BP’s identity. Finally, there will be a discussion of the stability of identity.

Discussion of the results

Comparing the results from the press releases was not particularly straightforward. The reason is that at the beginning and during the crisis BP were very busy publishing press releases and updating the section dedicated to the oil spill almost daily. However, after September they gradually stopped publishing press releases; only very few press releases were published in September and October, and the ones that were published had very little useful information for this thesis’ analysis. On their website, BP have established a response time line, which provides an overview of their responses during the crisis; the last response was on September 29, which could be interpreted as BP considering the crisis over. With that being said, there is imbalance between the two groups of press releases because of the great difference in the numbers of press releases; it is possible that this has caused a result that is not completely reliable. Therefore, one should not look at the result without slight scepticism. However, because it is not possible to do further research at this point, these results must suffice. They do show a tendency, however, that BP’s values have changed during the crisis, which will be discussed further in the following section.

Values

The results of the analysis show that the values in the two groups of press releases are not similar at all. Only four of the values are present in both groups, while the rest of the values are different. Most of the values correspond to those that were located in the code of conduct and sustainability review, which means that in spite of the crisis, BP have not forgotten about their values.

However, because the dissimilarity between the two groups it can be concluded that there is no consistency between the values communicated in the period between April and October. What supports this claim is that in both groups of press releases there were one or two values with far higher numbers of location than the others. In the group of press releases from during the crisis these were “commitment” and “effectiveness”, and in the other group they were “safety” and

\[109\] http://www.bp.com/iframe.do?categoryId=9035136&contentId=7065156
“trust”. As already touched upon in the analysis, this can be explained as BP’s primary focus changing during the period of crisis.

What this means can be discussed; as mentioned, BP did not disregard their initial values completely because many of these values were present in either groups of press releases. For that reason, one might argue that there is consistency and therefore stability in the values. However, the difference between the groups of press releases and the shift of focus should not be ignored; on the contrary, it can be argued that these factors are signs of instability. In other words, BP did not communicate the same core value throughout the entire crisis.

It could be argued that the situation demanded of BP to communicate two different values in order to remain sincere. If they had continued talking about commitment and never moved on to talking about safety and trust, they would appear irresponsible towards their stakeholders. As Thyssen argued earlier in the theory section; organisations are required to change its values in order to keep up with time. In other words, it was necessary that BP shifted their primary communicated values in the press releases.

It could be argued that the crisis can be regarded as accelerators of the values’ changing process. If the crisis had not occurred, more time would have passed before BP would experience any real need to change their values. However, the result of the alteration might have turned out differently had the crisis not occurred; there would not have been the same need for the focus of safety and trust if no accident had happened. This is something one can only speculate about.

It can be discussed what effect this result might have on BP and the theory of values in general. With the knowledge of the probable instability of values, one might question their sincerity; if the values are bound to change at some point anyway, how can one be certain if the organisation is truly genuine when communicating them? It is no surprise that BP’s reputation is flawed at this point; being so strong advocates for safety and still such a devastating accident could take place truly challenges BP’s sincerity. It will take a great amount of effort to repair their damaged reputation, which is what BP are initiating at the moment by talking about regaining trust in their press releases. In time, the price on BP stakes will probably return to normal but due to the lingering damage to the coasts of the Mexican Gulf, it will take much longer for the consumers to trust BP and believe in their values again.
Regarding the theory of values, this thesis is only a small contribution to the field of research. It does, however, support the claims of for example Schultz and Thyssen, among others, regarding the instability of values. It does not claim that values are inadequate or overestimated; however, it could be discussed if they are attributed a bit too much significance compared to the shortness of their lifespan. Much more research can be conducted on this area, specifically in regard to the stability of values and if their importance to organisation should be reconsidered.

**Results of analysis and the Value Survey**

As mentioned in the theory chapter, Rokeach has been very influential on the research of values. According to both Rokeach and Aust, it is possible to apply the Rokeach Value Survey to organisations, meaning that the values listed in the Value Survey can also be found in organisations. The purpose of this section is to determine whether the Rokeach Value Survey is truly applicable to organisations, or if there is at least some correlation to BP’s values.

**Results versus Value Survey**

Starting off with the instrumental values, the analysis only showed two clear matches between the Value Survey and all of BP’s communication material, which are “honesty” and “responsibility”. It could be argued, though, that “broadmindedness” could correspond to “diversity” in terms of employees, because BP promise not to be judgemental against any employee. However, so far that only makes three matches. With that being said, there appears to be no real coherence between BP’s values and the instrumental values of the Value Survey. However, one could argue that it was a matter of fact that there would be at least some matches, as instrumental values deal with daily behaviour; it could be argued that “honesty” and “responsibility” are universal values and that these are needed in order for a society to function properly.

To continue with the terminal values, it is not possible to find any coherency between the results and the Value Survey whatsoever. The explanation for this result can be discussed. The most obvious explanation would be that organisations do not have the same kind of terminal values as individuals. This is something that will be discussed more in detail later in the following section.
Discussion of the results of Aust’s study

As already mentioned in the theory section, Aust is one of the advocates for Rokeach’s theory. In his study of the Value Survey, he concluded that it is possible to use it on organisations because of the positive results he achieved in his study.

What should be mentioned is that the organisation which Aust conducted his study on is the United Church of God; it could therefore be argued that the study is coloured by Aust’s choice of organisation. The difference between a church and basically every other organisation is hard to miss. The values found in churches can be regarded as being religious and associated with love and salvation. Those values are not usually found in “regular” organisations.

In other words, a possible reason for the positive result of Aust’s study could be that Rokeach’s terminal values can be regarded as being rather religious. Because the Value Survey is based on the values of American individuals in the 1960s, it is obvious that religion is an important factor for the result of the study. As mentioned in the theory section, one of the six parameters in Rokeach’s study is religion; that means that religion had a major influence on the outcome of the result. This comes to show in the list of terminal values where values like “salvation”, “forgiving” and “obedient” are found. These are values that are usually associated with religion where you can receive salvation, or you can be forgiven for your sins, or you are obedient to your god. It would be highly unlikely to locate any of these values in organisations and the same goes for the rest of the terminal values; these are values of individuals, not organisations.

Whether it was pure coincidence that Aust chose a church for his study or if it was a deliberate choice in order to achieve a positive result is something that can be discussed.

In conclusion, it can be argued that more research on this field is necessary in order to determine if Rokeach’s Value Survey can be applied to organisations. The conclusion of this thesis, however, is that the tendency shows that the Value Survey cannot be applied to organisations.

Further perspectives on the Value Survey

As determined above, the result of this thesis shows that the Value Survey does not seem to be working with organisations. That gives rise to putting the Value Survey into further perspective. Would it be possible to apply the Value Survey on organisations successfully if it was modified and
updated and became more contemporary? In case that was put into operation, would it be sufficient to conduct a similar study, that is, a study on Americans today, or should the study be global?

As mentioned above, the values of the Value Survey are rather religious because religion was a significant part of people’s lives in the 19060s. However, it still is today; it is a common fact that a large percent of the American population have religious beliefs and for a major part these religious views influence the way they live their lives. For that reason, if the study was conducted in certain European countries, chances are that the result of the study would be very different from Rokeach’s results, as religion does not play nearly as big a role there as in the US.

However, what does this tell us about organisations and values? Unless a modified version of the Value Survey would work with organisation, there would have to be developed an entirely new value instrument. This is not something this thesis can offer because it would be far too comprehensive in terms of interviews with a large number of organisations and a too short time frame. However, it would be interesting for the field of value theory to conduct such a study. There would also be other factors to take into consideration; would such a study follow the same model as the Value Survey and focus on one country only? If a global study was to be conducted, there would be aspects such as cultural differences that should be taken into consideration, as there is great difference between values in the Western and the Eastern world.

Should this thesis propose a study or a new value instrument, it could look as follows; it would be structured in the same way as the Value Survey with an equal number of terminal and instrumental values. In order to collect these values, there would have to be conducted interviews with a number of organisations as participants; what is meant with organisations in this case is only the top management. This is necessary in order to make the study consistent. The interviews would then collect the interviewees’ information about the organisations’ values, and thereafter analyse the results and determine if it is possible to produce a universal value instrument that is applicable on organisations.

It is, of course, very simple to theorise about it; whether it is possible to conduct such a study, this thesis cannot provide an answer to. The hypothesis is interesting, though, and hopefully a similar
study will be conducted at some point and offer the instrument which the Rokeach Value Survey could not be for this thesis.

Identity
After having accounted for the values, identity will now be dealt with. The purpose of the following section is to discuss which kind of identity BP possess, which will be done by using the values found in the analysis. In the theory section, there was presented two ways of approaching the concept of identity; the first approach belongs to Balmer and Greyser, and the other one belongs to Schultz. In the following sections there will first be accounted for which of the identity approaches that fits best with BP, then looked at the values in order to determine the identity, and finally the concept of identity will be discussed in accordance to the problem statement.

Schultz
As determined in the theory section, Schultz’ Corporate Brand Tool Kit consists of one identity with a structure consisting of three elements. If misalignment occurs between any of these elements, it will result in a dysfunctional identity.

When looking at the misalignment gaps presented in Schultz’s diagram, the gap that fits this situation the most is the image-culture gap. Schultz explains that this gap occurs when the organisation does not live up to its promises; in this case, BP’s promises of safety and focus on the environment clashes with the oil spill and deaths of eleven employees. In other words, there has been a misalignment which has caused damage to BP’s identity.

However, this is only an overall way of perceiving this matter. One could argue that Schultz’s concept of identity could be regarded as looking at identity on macro-level and Balmer and Greyser’s concept of identity would then be working on micro-level. Schultz’s diagram portrays identity very well if it is not necessary to go into detail with identity. If details are necessary, Balmer and Greyser’s concept offers a more thorough definition of identity. This will be touched upon in the following section.
Balmer and Greyser
As explained in the theory section, Balmer and Greyser argue that it is possible for an organisation to possess five different kinds of identity, with the possibility of having more than one at the same time with causing misalignment.

It could be argued that at the beginning of the crisis, the identity that fits best with BP is what Balmer and Greyser call “Communicated”; it could also be argued that their identity is “Actual”, but because there is no option of asking the top management directly, it is only possible to analyse what they are communicating. For that reason, it can be argued that it is the “Communicated” identity that BP possess at the beginning of the crisis.

After the crisis, however, their identity seems to have changed into what Balmer and Greyser call “Ideal”; BP explain how they plan on focusing more on safety measures and regaining the trust of their stakeholders and consumers. In other words, they speak of something that is ideal for them; it would be ideal for them if safety measures were top priority and under control, and it would be ideal for them if they once again obtained the trust of their stakeholders. For that reason, it can be argued that it is an objective for BP to have their identity changed back to “Actual”, so that their ideals have been fulfilled and they actually are what they ought to be.

Finding identity with values
Among the values found in the analysis were, for example, “environment” and “sustainability”. From these values it can be argued that BP are an organisation that is caring about the environment and creating solutions that are sustainable and environmental. In other words, they are trying to embellish the fact that they are an oil company.

Through other values such as “dignity”, “diversity” and “respect”, BP are communicating that they are committed to human rights and care about their employees and their wellbeing. Because BP are a global organisation with departments all over the world, it can be argued that these values are signalling that even in countries where equality is not as common as in the western world, they respect their employees. This only emphasises their commitment to human rights.

To provide a final example, values like “commitment” and “efficiency” signal that BP are dedicated to what they do and doing it with as much efficiency as possible. These values were some of those
with highest occurrence, and for that reason it can be argued that BP have the mentality of wanting to be among the best in their field.

In conclusion, it can be argued that through their values, BP are communicating that they are an organisation that cares about the employees, the environment and strives to be the best.

**Has BP’s identity changed?**

Whether BP’s identity has changed or not solely depends on how one approaches the concept of identity. Seen from the perspective of Schultz it can be argued that BP’s identity has not changed; their identity is not completely repaired but it is an ongoing progress.

However, seen from the perspective of Balmer and Greyser, as this thesis chooses to do, there has indeed been an alteration in BP’s identity. As discussed above, it can be argued that BP’s identity has changed from “Actual” to “Ideal”. With that being said, it is possible for an organisation’s identity to change which leads to the following section.

**Is identity unstable?**

If one were to perceive identity from Balmer and Greyser’s point of view, identity can be regarded as being of unstable character. Under certain circumstances it is possible for an identity to change, and as discovered in this thesis, the process of alteration can be accelerated by critical situations, such as when a crisis occurs.

Because it has previously been determined that values can be regarded as foundation for the identity, it can be argued that if the values begin to crack, the identity will crack as well. In other words, because of the fact that BP’s values changed during the crisis, it is highly probable that BP’s identity became unstable and changed as well. This only emphasises the theory of Balmer and Greyser’s concept of identity matches with BP’s case.

If an organisation suddenly finds itself in an inconvenient situation, will it be tempted to alter its identity in order to fit the situation? More importantly, should it alter its identity? The big issue is ethics. Would it be right for an organisation to alter its identity as they see fit? One of the concerns regarding an unstable identity is whether the consumers and stakeholders can trust the organisation; if it changes its identity to fit a particular situation, could one argue that it does not have one fixed identity to begin with?
According to Gioia et. al., this might be the case. “No longer can they rely on the organization having a single, stable identity that can be identified, agreed upon, and easily projected.”

Final thoughts on values and identity

After having discussed both values and identity, there is now one question that demands an answer: with the knowledge of the instability of organisations’ values and identity, is it possible to trust them, knowing that what they promise to be standing for now might be something different in a few months?

This is of course something that is entirely up to the individual person. However, as explained by Thyssen in the theory chapter, it is an unavoidable, but also necessary process. Organisations need to change to values in order to keep up with the rest of the world. Of course, whether the change is for better or worse, it is still a change and it questions the organisations’ sincerity and consistency.

One could argue that with organisations like BP, one must trust that change is good; they want to improve the conditions for the employees, improve their technologies in order to become more environmental and sustainable. However, at the end of the day, it is all a matter of trust and ethics.

Conclusion

This sums up the discussion section. The two main themes of this thesis were discussed, regarding the results of the analysis and what they mean to the problem statement.

It was argued that BP’s values were somewhat consistent throughout the crisis, meaning that many of the similar values were repeated during the crisis. However, the main focus of the press releases changed during that period of time, in which case it was argued that the values were unstable.

Rokeach’s Value Survey was also discussed and it was concluded that it was not possible to apply it to organisations with success. It was argued that the reason for Aust’s success with applying the

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110 Gioia et. al., 2000, 78.
theory to an organisation was because of the fact that the case study was a church. For that reason, the possibility of a value instrument targeted at organisations was discussed.

Following that was the discussion of identity; in correlation to the theory section, Balmer and Greyser’s and Schultz’s view on identity was discussed, and it was concluded that Schultz’s view was too simple for this thesis; Balmer and Greyser’s view provided more necessary details. In addition, it was argued that BP’s identity had changed from “Actual” to “Ideal”. For that reason, it was discussed that identity appears to be an unstable character.

After having summing up the discussion of this thesis, I will now turn to the final section, where the entire thesis will be concluded on.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this thesis was to discover and determine if it was possible for an organisation to maintain its values and identity throughout a crisis situation.

In order to provide an answer to this question, it was a necessity to conduct a qualitative comparative analysis based on the communication material from BP during the recent oil spill crisis in the Gulf of Mexico, which was the case study for this thesis. The communication material consisted of press releases with BP’s code of conduct and sustainability review as supporting material.

The structure of the theory chapter consisted of three parts; identity, values and crisis theory. It was structured this way in order to create a clear overview of the three concepts. Values and identity are closely connected but are still completely different from each other, which was important to clarify. The purpose of the theory chapter was to delve deeply into the theory in order to acquire knowledge that could be used for a proper fundament for the analysis.

In the identity section there was particular focus on two different theories developed by Balmer and Greyser and Schultz, and in the values section there was particular focus on Rokeach and his value instrument. The Rokeach Value Survey would serve as the fundamental basis for the theory of values and in the analysis, there would be a comparison of the results and the values listed in the Value Survey.
An analysis of BP’s code of conduct, sustainability review from 2009 and press releases published at the beginning of the crisis and during the crisis was conducted. The press releases were divided into two sections: press releases published during the crisis and press releases published after the crisis; the reason for this was to be able to conduct a comparative analysis and thereby determine if any change occurred during the crisis. The code of conduct and the sustainability review could only figure as support of the press releases from the beginning of the crisis because they belonged to a different text genre than the press releases; for that reason, it would not be possible to make an accurate comparison.

In the communication material a range of different values was located which were all listed and thereafter compared. The comparison of the results showed that BP’s values and identity altered during the crisis; BP’s primary focus of action changed and the values and identity followed suit. At the beginning of the crisis, it was determined that BP’s identity corresponded to Balmer and Greyser’s “Communicated” identity, while after the crisis it had changed into their “Ideal” identity. Whereas the primary focus of the values was on “Commitment” at the beginning of the crisis, it had changed into “Safety” and “Trust” after the crisis.

In the analysis there was a particular focus on Rokeach and the Value Survey in order to determine if the instrument was in fact applicable on organisations; therefore, the values listed in the Value Survey and the results of the analysis were compared in order to confirm the claims. The result of this comparison, however, contradicted the claims as there were very none to very few similarities between the results.

Instead, an idea to a new instrument was suggested which, in theory, could be applicable to organisations. The instrument was based on the same structure as that of the Value Survey but the data required would be needed to be obtained from organisations instead of individuals via interviews. If such an instrument had been used for the analysis, it was argued that it would most likely have led to different results.

This result led to a discussion of the sincerity of organisations; among the questions asked in the discussion was if it was possible for consumers and stakeholders as well to believe in the values of organisations if they are unstable? It was argued that the changing process of values is unavoidable; the values need to be modified because if the organisation does not change, it will...
not keep up to date with the rest of the world. This led to the question if values and identity are contributed too much significance; if they are merely momentary entities, perhaps they should not appear so important? However, this claim clashes with Aust’s claim that “values are the essence of organisations”\textsuperscript{111}. 

As mentioned in the introduction, the approach of this thesis is qualitative; it does not provide a range of case studies with a large quantity of thoroughly prepared data, which can substantiate the result of this thesis. However, this thesis shows a tendency in the way values and identity work in organisations, which could be interesting to further examine and the results indicate that there is potential in conducting such a study.

All in all, this thesis is a small contribution to the study of values and identity and it argues that there is still a great deal of research to be conducted on these topics. One thing is certain thought; the conclusion of this thesis is that it is challenging for an organisation to maintain its values and identity throughout a crisis, and in BP’s case it could not be accomplished.

\textsuperscript{111} Aust, 2004, 516.
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