Title

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Journal

RESEARCH IN ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR, VOL. 21, 1999, 21

ISSN

0191-3085

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Publication Date

1999

Peer reviewed

AN EXPANDED MODEL OF
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

Previous theories of organizational identification have focused on how individuals define and maintain positive self-concepts based on their cognitive connections to favorably perceived organizations. Yet, recent empirical findings suggest that organizational identifications may be defined in more complex and adaptive ways. In particular, recent research suggests that peoples' social identities may be based on both positive and negative cognitive relationships with organizations, as well as conflicted relationships and neutral relationships. Grounded in these findings, I develop a theory of organizational identification that includes three new cognitive processes by which individuals may define themselves: organizational disidentification, organizational schizo-identification, and organizational neutral-identification. I discuss how adding these cognitions to models of organizational identity extend the application of these models and further illuminate the adaptive and flexible nature of the human self-concept in organizational settings.

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INTRODUCTION

"...[a person] has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him"
—(William James, 1890, p. 294).

How a person perceives his or her self-concept in relation to social groups has been one of a few central and enduring themes of social psychology (James, 1890; Baldwin, 1897). Yet, only recently have theorists examined the specific ways in which people define themselves in terms of their organizational relationships (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Further, these theories have focused on straightforward connections between organizational and individual identities "focused more on a static sense of *being* identified rather than *becoming* identified" (Ashforth, 1998, p. 271). In this paper, I propose an expanded model of organizational identification grounded in recent work on complex and/or non-traditional relationships between individual and organizational identities and their evolution over time. I propose that this expanded model may better explain identification processes in newer and more unusual organizations, as well as, in more traditional organizations with evolving or complex identities. As a result, this model may begin to answer calls for more adaptive and flexible explications of organizational identification that mirror the adaptive and flexible self (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998).

Current Frameworks of Social And Organizational Identification

Although this paper focuses on the process of *organizational* identification, social psychological theory and research on the processes of *group* attachment and identification provide the conceptual basis for much of the work at organizational levels. In particular, psychological theories of Social Identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1990), and Self-Categorization (Turner, 1987) provide the framework for models of social and organizational identification. In the following sections, I provide an overview of current frameworks of social identification and organizational identification that are grounded in these theories. I review the indicators, antecedents, and consequences of these forms of identification.

Social Identifications

Indicators. Considerable psychological theory and research has examined how individuals' define their self-concepts through their connections with social groups (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1987; Abrams & Hogg, 1990a; Kramer, 1993). Most of this research suggests that individuals routinely develop social identities based on cognitive links between their identities and a group's identity (e.g., its central, distinctive, and enduring traits), (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). For example, if I identify with the social group "parents," I might believe that my identity con-

tains many of the prototypical dimensions that define parents (e.g., "knows the words to the Barney theme song," "drives a mini-van," "carries a first-aid kit in the car").

According to this perspective, group identifications are indicated by self-perceptions of "oneness" with a social group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989)—or as Abrams and Hogg (1990, p. 25) put it, more generally:

> "social identifications [are] identity-contingent self-descriptions deriving from membership in social categories (nationality, sex, race, occupation, sports teams, and more short-lived and transient group memberships)."

Abrams and Hogg (1990, p. 25) further distinguish social identifications from personal identifications that are indicated by "idiosyncratic descriptions of self which are essentially tied to and emerge from close and enduring interpersonal relationships," such as "friend of Joe's," or "lover of Bach." Finally, while Tajfel (1982) proposed that social identities may derive from emotional attachments to social groups, social identity theorists generally agree that social identities and identifications, themselves, are basically cognitive constructs (Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

In sum, social identity theories suggest that *social identifications* are indicated by individual-level self-perceptions describing the perceived overlap between a person's identity and a group's identity.

Antecedents. To understand the antecedents of social identification we must first understand the cognitive processes that lead to identification. Social identity theorists have proposed that two primary cognitive processes lead to social identifications: self-categorizations, and social comparisons (Turner, 1985; Tajfel, 1982). First, people use self-categorizations to accentuate similarities between themselves and members of an in-group (i.e., a group to which they are affiliated or identified), as well as to accentuate dissimilarities between themselves and members of an out-group. That is, "self-categorization causes self-perception and self-definition to become more in terms of the individual's representation of the defining characteristics of the group, or the group prototype" (Abrams & Hogg, 1990, p. 21).

Similarly, social comparisons are used to maximize intergroup distinctiveness in ways that reflect positively on one's ingroup (Wood, 1989). As Abrams and Hogg (1990, p. 23) note, "It is important to accentuate intergroup differences especially on those dimensions which reflect favourably upon ingroup. By differentiating ingroup from outgroup on dimensions on which the ingroup falls at the evaluatively positive pole, the ingroup acquires a *positive distinctiveness*, and thus a relatively *positive social identity* in comparison to the outgroup."

Together, these social self-categorizations and social comparisons define the boundaries of one's self-concept based on links to social groups. As such, individuals are motivated to choose self-categorizations that most positively highlight valued and distinctive traits, and that provide favorable social comparisons with

others. In line with this reasoning, a number of researchers have shown that perceived group distinctiveness and prestige are primary antecedents to social identification (Brown & Williams, 1984; Schlenker, 1980). Individuals are more likely to identify with a group and display that identification if they perceive that group to be positive and to positively reflect on their own identity (Schlenker, 1980). Thus, Cialdini and colleagues' (1976) famous "football field" experiments showed that university students were more likely to wear a school sweatshirt on days following a win by the school's football team than on days following a loss.

Researchers have also found that isolation from outside contacts and strong affiliation with a single group may prompt identification as a means of meeting needs for affiliation (Van Maanen, 1973). That is, individuals will identify with a group with which they exclusively spend time because they have few other options for affiliation. In this manner, Galanter (1980) found that individuals with fewer external ties and greater affiliative feelings toward a modern religious sect (i.e., The Unification Church), were more likely to join than those who had greater external ties and less affiliation.

Consequences.   Social identifications have been shown to have important consequences for groups and their members (Carbaugh, 1996). Social identification may help individuals to meet a variety of human needs, including self-enhancement needs, safety needs, and affiliation needs (see Pratt, 1998, for a review). As mentioned above, people may meet self-enhancement needs by strategic and proactive identifications with prestigious and high status social groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1990). Thus, social identifications may be sought to achieve and affirm positive distinctiveness in one's self-concept (Brewer, 1991). Identifiers may then, "bask in the reflective glory" of these groups' achievements (Cialdini, 1984). A number of studies have also shown that individuals are prone to an ingroup favoritism (i.e., favoring the positions of the groups to which they identify) on important, and self-defining traits (Hinkle & Brown, 1990). Together, these findings suggest that, on identity-relevant traits, group members gain some self-esteem from identification with positively viewed groups.

By contrast, affiliative and safety needs may be met by identification in situations where a person feels isolated, vulnerable, or uncertain about one's social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1996). Researchers have recently suggested that identification helps people to overcome social isolation by putting them "in a satisfying relationship with the person or persons with whom [they] are identifying" (Aronson, 1992, p. 34). Further, recent studies have shown that individuals who perceive themselves as outgroup members, not identified with a relevant work group, may suffer negative health consequences, including elevated blood pressure and lose self-reported, well-being (James, Lovato, & Khoo, 1994).

In addition to these individual-level benefits, social psychologists have described a number of group benefits of member identification. For example, in a number of studies on group cooperation, Kramer and Brewer (1984) showed that group iden-

tification led members to increase cooperation and reduce their consumption of dwindling, common pool of resources. In a related study, Boninger and colleagues (1995) showed that the strength of a person's group identification (e.g., identification with anti-abortion groups) is predictive of his or her perception of issues importance (e.g., the importance of abortion debates). Finally, Reid and Sumiga (1984) provided evidence that group identifiers are able to generate arguments supporting their group much more easily than those opposing it—suggesting a general supportive attitude from identifiers towards the identified-with group.

Organizational Identifications

Following from the above work on group identifications, research on organizational identifications has examined how individuals define themselves based on their cognitive links to organizations. This work is much more recent, grounded in relatively little empirical research. Yet, over the past several years researchers have begun to synthesize a coherent framework of the indicators, antecedents, and consequences of organizational identification (see Whetten & Godfrey, 1998 for a review of recent trends).

Indicators. As an extension of group identification, *organizational identification* has been defined as "the degree to which a person defines him or herself as having the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization" (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 239). Organizational identification is said to occur when "one comes to integrate beliefs about one's organization into one's identity" (Pratt, 1998, p. 172). These definitions suggest that organizational identification is a cognitive perception of self (versus a perception of the organization), that explains a person's sense of connection or "oneness" with an organization's identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

For example, if I identify with the organization "The University of California, Davis," I might perceive myself to have many of the attributes that define that institution (e.g., "commitment to public education," "interest in state politics," "pride in agricultural roots"). My identification with the organization depends not only on the positiveness of these traits, but with their perceived overlap with central and distinctive traits that I use to define myself.

While early work compared organizational identification to "organizational commitment" (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986), or defined it as a "value-congruence" between the individual and the organization (Schneider et al., 1971; Hall & Schneider, 1972), definitions focusing on identification as cognitive, self-perceptions have been largely accepted as the standard in organizational studies (Dutton et al., 1994; Pratt, 1998). That is, while there are varying degrees of overlap in the common use of the terms "organizational identification," "organizational commitment," and "organizational loyalty," the definition of organizational identification as a self-perception *not* an organizational perception distinguishes it from constructs

Table 1.   Empirical Findings Related to Organizational Identification

AUTHOR(S)	FINDINGS
I. PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION	
	(US Army recruits)
Mael & Ashforth (1995)	1. preference for outdoor activities,
	2. preference for non-delinquent lifestyle
	3. preference for group attachments,
	4. preference for intellectual pastimes
	(Recently-graduated MBAs)
Ashforth & Saks (1996)	1. Institutionalized socialization tactics: 1. collective learning,
	2. formal training,
	3. sequential advancement,
	4. fixed evaluation and promotion,
	5. serial learning,
	6. required investiture
	(UPS employees)
Elsbach & Glynn (1996)	1. Visible involvement in advertising, charitable campaigns
	(Art Museum Members)
Bhattacharya, et al (1995)	1. Perceived Organizational Prestige
	2. Expectation confirmation with services
	3. Length and visibility of membership
	(College Alumni)
Mael & Ashforth (1992)	1. Perceived organizational distinctiveness)
	2. Perceived organizational prestige
	3. Absence of intra-organizational competition
	4. Tenure (years at school)
	5. Satisfaction with school (in achieving goals)
	6. Sentimentality (tendency to relive past/ties with past)
	(Petro-chemical firm employees)
Oliver (1990)	1. Participatory values: influence in co, democratic control
	2. Satisfaction with rewards
	(College Basketball Team)
Adler & Adler (1988)	1. Public representation
	2. Paternalistic relationship with coach
	(new employees, various orgs.)
Pierce & Dunham (1987)	1. Strong growth needs
	2. participation in decision-making
	3. job complexity
	4. experienced responsibility for work
	(NVC Australia Pty. Ltd.)
Cacioppe & Kenny (1987)	1. Employee Stock Ownership
	(Trucking firm)
Long (1978)	1. Employee Stock Ownership

(continued)

Table 1   (Continued)

AUTHOR(S)	FINDINGS
	(Priests and R & D scientists)
Hall & Schneider (1972)	1. Tenure
	2. Satisfied needs for esteem, autonomy, self-fulfillment
	3. Job Challenge: challenging work, do things I like, talents used, jobs are important
	(Forest Service Employees)
Schneider, Hall, &	1. Tenure
Nygren (1971)	2. Supportive, and Involved self-image
	3. Job Involvement: major satisf comes from work
	4. Job Challenge: challenging work, job is important

II.   EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

	(College Alumni)
Mael & Ashforth (1992)	1. Greater monetary contributions
	2. More likely to recommend to others
	3. More likely to participate in school functions
	(Hospital Nurses)
Alpander (1990)	1. job satisfaction and job motivation
	(Managers in Food Service Corporation)
Meyer, et al (1989)	1. Greater performance and perceived promotability
	(Basketball Team)
Adler & Adler (1988)	1. Intense Loyalty toward Organization
	(MBA Students)
O'Reilly & Chatman (1986)	1. Greater extrarole, prosocial behaviors
	2. More likely to participate in extrarole activities
	(Federal Health Service Scientists)
Lee (1971)	1. View external opportunities as less attractive

like commitment and loyalty (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 1998). As Pratt (1998) suggests, organizational commitment might be related to questions such as "How satisfied am I with the organization?", organizational identification is related to the question "How do I perceive myself in relation to the organization?" (Pratt, 1998).

Much less empirical work has examined organizational identification than has examined group identification. Further, a majority of the empirical studies on organizational identification have been completed in the last 10 years. An overview of empirical findings about antecedents and consequences organizational identification is given in Table 1 below.

Antecedents.   Similar to work on social identifications, work on organizational identification processes suggest that people's self-categorizations and social comparisons lead to identification (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Elsbach,

1999). Further, organizational researchers also suggest that the notions of self-enhancement and affiliation are primary motives for these social cognitions. In this respect, Pratt (1998) suggests that self-categorizations and social comparisons contribute to the process of organizational identification by: (1) making the organization positively distinct, and (2) emphasizing the homogeneity and affiliation of organizational members.

In the first case, identification is aided by explicit inter-organizational categorizations and comparisons that make salient the organization's relative, positional status and valued core ideals. For example, Elsbach and Kramer (1996) found that the *Business Week* rankings of U.S. business schools were identity threatening to many business school members because they emphasized the school's favorable status vis-à-vis other schools. By contrast, a number of empirical studies have shown that distinctive or prestigious organizational images (e.g., a top-ranked university, the highly-respected U.S. Forest Service) are likely to increase members organizational identification (Schneider, Hall, & Nygren, 1971; Hall & Schneider, 1972; Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

In the second case, identification is aided by organization-level categorizations that suggest internal consistency, homogeneity, and affiliation among members. For example, Kramer and Brewer (1985) found that finding similarities among all organization members increased the likelihood of members' organization-level categorizations versus group-level categorizations. In a similar vein, recent studies have shown that visible displays of the alignment between member and organizational ideals (e.g., through employee testimonials in advertisements) may improve member identification with an organizations (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Elsbach & Glynn, 1996; Bhattacharya et al., 1995). In a related stream of research, a few studies have found that personal factors related to needs for affiliation (e.g., "need for group attachment," Mael & Ashforth, 1995) may increase a member's propensity for organizational identification (Pierce & Dunham, 1987).

Consequences.   Recent empirical studies also suggest that organizational identification has important implications for individuals and organizations. In terms of individual benefits, theorists propose that positive organizational identities may lead to self-enhancement in ways similar to social identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). That is, identification with positively viewed organizations increases identifiers' self-esteem and perceived status. In support of this notion, researchers have shown that organizational identification leads to greater job satisfaction and motivation among employees (Alpander, 1990), as well as improving managers' perceptions of identifier's job performance and promotability (Meyer et al., 1989).

As for organization level benefits, identification has been shown to increase members' loyalty to the organization (Adler & Adler, 1988), their view of the organization as an attractive job opportunity (Lee, 1971), their promotion of the organization and willingness to contribute to it financially (Mael & Ashforth,

1992), and their participation in extrarole, prosocial behaviors (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). In general, identification "helps organizations retain control over members," because identifiers align organizational outcomes with their own (Pratt, 1998, p. 184).

In sum, the above findings suggest that social and organizational identification are cognitive, self-perceptions, enacted through self-categorizations and social comparisons that highlight a group's or organization's positive distinctiveness and internal homogeneity, and that may provide individuals with greater self-esteem and feelings of affiliation, and organizations with greater member loyalty and support.

Shortcomings of Current Frameworks

[R]esearchers need to better understand the subtleties and complexities of organizational identification and disidentification....few researchers have asked whether there are multiple processes of identification and disidentification....also, we have tended to focus on how a single social identity is either adopted or lost within an organizational context....I have found it difficult to explain [more complex] processes of identifying and disidentifying using extant theories of organizational identification (Pratt, 1998, pp. 200-201).

While the above frameworks of social and organizational identification are adequate in many organizational contexts (e.g., for most traditional employees in relatively stable organizations with simple, internally congruent identities), there are a number of organizational contexts that are not adequately described by these models. In particular, contexts involving negative relationships with organizations (e.g., ex-members, members of opposing groups), relationships with organizations that have complex, evolving, or seemingly incongruent identities (e.g., a department store chain that is moving into financial services, conglomerates that sell both cookies and cigarettes), and relationships with organizations that involve intentional impartiality (e.g., an arbitrator's relationship with negotiating organizations, or a "moderate" political candidate's feelings toward a radical environmental group that improves her standing with liberals but hurts it with conservatives). Recent research in social psychology and organizational identity provides evidence that such contexts present identification dilemmas for individuals (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 1998; Zabusky & Barley, 1997; Carbaugh, 1996). These researchers' findings suggest that individuals' cognitive reactions to such dilemmas are not fully explained by current models of organizational identification because those models do not allow for negative, split, or neutral identifications. A review of these shortcomings is given below.

Negative Organizational Relationships

For the most part (see Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 1998 for a exception), identity researchers have not examined the how individuals define themselves in relation to organizations that embody values or ideals that conflict with those of their own

social identities. Yet such relationships are likely to exist for many people. For example, it might be important for journalist working for the prestigious *New York Times* newspaper to maintain a cognitive separation between his or her social identity and the identity of the *New York Daily News*, which is considered by many to be a low-status tabloid. For such a journalist, claiming to be a *disidentifier* of the *New York Daily News* may be as important as claiming to be an identifier of the *New York Times*. Further, such cognitive separation may be most common in situations where a person believes he or she may be mistakenly labeled as an identifier with a group or organization with which he or she actually "disidentifies " (e.g., at a press conference outside of New York where the similarity in the two papers' names might cause confusion). Thus, *it is not organizations that are obviously in conflict with one's identity that are most likely to produce disidentification, but those that are distinct in important ways and confusingly similar in other ways.* As Swann and Hill (1982, p. 63) note: "The best way to bring out the 'true selves' in people is to challenge their self-conceptions, to tell them that they are not the persons they believe themselves to be."

These examples and findings suggest that, although not included in current models, cognitive separations or "disidentifications" may be as important as cognitive connections or identifications in defining a person's social identity. This omission is surprising, given the importance of social distinction and differentiation in theories of social identity. As Brewer and Kramer (1985, p. 224) note, "Most important is the role of social category membership, and of social comparison between categories, in the maintenance of a person's positive social identity, a role which leads individuals to *seek* distinctiveness between their own group and others, particularly on dimensions that are positively valued." Related psychological research shows that individuals may use self-categorization (i.e., definition of the social groups of which they are members) as a means of active dissociation from groups they feel are not self-defining (Brewer, 1991; Steele & Aronson, 1995). These distinctions are meaningful, not only in terms of what they include, but also by what they exclude. As Brewer (1991, p. 475) notes,

> Names such as Azerbaijan, Serbia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Tamil, Eritrea, Basques, Kurds, Welsh, and Quebec are currently familiar because they represent ethnic and national identities capable of arousing intense emotional commitment and self-sacrifice on the part of individuals. Furthermore, they all involve some form of separatist action—attempts to establish or preserve distinctive group identities against unwanted political or cultural merger within a larger collective entity.

Further, social psychologists suggest that, by defining themselves as members of social categories that are inclusive enough to confer legitimacy but exclusive enough to denote distinctiveness on core attributes, individuals attempt to maintain identities that are "optimally distinctive" (Brewer, 1991). This research suggests that people are threatened by categorizations that portray them as too distinctive *or* too undistinctive. In support of this notion, Steele and Aronson

(1995) found that people distanced themselves from distinctive categorizations that carried with them unwanted stereotypes, while Snyder and Fromkin (1980) found that people actively disassociated themselves from groups that were undistinctive in their current context, even if they denoted high status to their members in other contexts. Thus, among their peers, Hollywood actors might dissociate themselves from groups of former soap opera actors, even though being a famous soap star might be highly prestigious among non-actors.

Such notions about the achievement of social distinctiveness through group association and disassociation might be traced back to Heider's (1958) balance theory of the self-concept. Heider's theory suggests that individuals maintain both connections *and* separations between themselves, their friends, and their beliefs to achieve balance in their self-concept. When individuals find themselves in a relationship in which they disagree about an issue with a friend, they are out of balance. To restore balance, they may either change their attitude about the issue or their attitude about their friend (i.e., they may separate themselves from the issue or from their friend). It is important to note that balance arises, not out of passive neutral-identification (i.e., a state in which a person neither connects nor separates from a person or issue), but out of active attempts to separate or disassociate from the person or issue.

In the same manner, it seems plausible that individuals may protect and balance their self-concepts through both connections and separations from organizations that embody identity-relevant issues or values. Individuals should, thus, move toward relationships where they identify with organizations with which they agree and disidentify (i.e., maintain a cognitive and emotional separation) with organizations with which they disagree; especially on important, self-defining issues (Steele, 1988).

In support of this perspective, anecdotal evidence suggests that individuals sometimes find it easier to define themselves by the social groups they do *not* belong to, than those to which they do belong (e.g., I'm not sure I'm a "feminist," but I know I'm not a "conservative"). Frequently, exclusion from a social group is the only thing that defines group membership (e.g., non-smokers). Similarly, individuals may find it easier to separate themselves from an organization whose identity contradicts a self-defining value, rather than to connect to an organization that supports it (e.g., I don't feel connected to any one gun control organization, but I feel strongly separated from the NRA).

Reports in the popular news media also suggest that at first many people may disidentify with the values or practices that a company displays (e.g., widespread discrimination against African-American customers at Denny's restaurants [Rice, 1996]), but over time, may come to identify the firm's name so closely with this practice that they eventually disidentify with the organization itself. As a consequence, organizations that are narrowly defined and strongly identified with a particular value or issue (e.g., the health and beauty products firm "The Body Shop" is identified with supporting native cultures through its use of native ingredients in

its products) may become targets of organizational disidentification specifically because of that distinctive value or issue (e.g., working with native cultures may be perceived as exploitive).

In a more manipulative manner, social marketers may strategically and proactively align organizations with a few salient issues through media campaigns as a means of provoking disidentification with the organization (e.g., in a campaign against tobacco giant, Phillip Morris, the California Anti-tobacco Coalition, has depicted the "Marlboro Man" in billboards with the caption, "Bob, I've got emphysema."). These organizations may then suffer negative consequences that might accompany disidentification (e.g., public protests, and boycotts of products or services).

Together, these theoretical and practical arguments suggest that social identities may be defined, at least in part, by a sense of active separation between a person's identity and that of an organization or social group. Such notions are not explicitly noted in current frameworks of social identity.

Complex or Evolving Organizational Relationships

A majority of extant findings about group and organizational identification suggest that individuals identify with organizations that they view—as a whole— in a positive light. For example, researchers have discussed how individuals acquire positive social identities through their associations with prestigious employers (e.g., a top-ranked business school), and/or reputable professional groups (e.g., physicians, professors, engineers) (Bhattacharya et al., 1995; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Hall & Schneider, 1972), and how they self-identify by conforming to behavioral norms of a prestigious employer (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), or dressing in ways that indicate affiliation with a high-status profession (Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997).

By contrast, much less research has examined how members might identify with organizations whose identities embody both positive and negative dimensions— that is, people who work in organizations with conflicted *hybrid identities* (Albert & Whetten, 1985) that are both enhancing and threatening to members' self-concepts. For example, how do employees of Wal Mart—which has been accused of destroying small-town economies, but also supports numerous charitable causes and provides local jobs—identify with their organization? In another case, how do faculty members who identified with a business school's long-standing identity as a "research institution" adapt to its evolution to a "teaching institution"? Developing a social identity based on links to such complex and evolving organizational identities appears fraught with problems.

On one hand, employees of organizations with conflicted identities may be wary of identifying with their organization because that would mean accepting its negative dimensions as self-defining (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). For example, Dutton and Dukerich (1991) found that following bad press about their organiza-

tion's treatment of the homeless, formerly proud employees of the New York Port Authority became cautious about identifying themselves to outsiders as organizational members.

On the other hand, employees who continue to work for an organization whose identity contains dimensions that are in conflict with their own identity (e.g., anti-smokers who work for a food division of a conglomerate that also makes cigarettes) may find it necessary to cognitively justify their employment, especially if they are professionals who would presumably have opportunities to work for less controversial firms. Merely defining their work to family and friends may present a dilemma to such employees, as they wrestle over how to explain their jobs without connecting themselves to the stigmatized part of organization's identity. How then, might such people self-identify as organizational members? Some insight comes from research on stigmatized groups.

Research on stigmatized groups suggests that some group members may attempt to highlight within-group variation as a means of enhancing their own status relative to the most negatively perceived group members (Goffman, 1959; Doosje et al., 1995). As Doosje and Ellemers (1997, p. 260) contend,

> Stressing intragroup variation in unfavorable intergroup comparative contexts can also be considered a *personal*-identity protection mechanism. To the extent that people hold a favorable self-image, the idea that there is considerable variation within the ingroup offers scope to maintain this self-image, even when their group as a whole is seen as inferior to other groups.

Similarly, Goffman (1963, p. 107) suggests,

> The stigmatized individual exhibits a tendency to stratify his "own" according to the degree to which their stigma is apparent and obtrusive. He can then take up in regard to those who are more evidently stigmatized than himself the attitudes the normals take to him. Thus do the hard of hearing stoutly see themselves as anything but deaf persons, and those with defective vision, anything but blind. It is in his affiliation with, or separation from, his more evidently stigmatized fellows, that the individual's oscillation of identification is most sharply marked.

In a related area, research on *ambivalence* (Pratt & Barnett, 1997) suggests that perceptions that one's self-concept fits somewhere between the identities of two or more organizations (or between two or more stages in single organization's identity evolution) may be common for individuals who occupy professional positions that are easily transferred across organizations or social groups. Such individuals have been defined as having "liminal identities" (Turner, 1967). For example, in their study of European Space Agency scientists, Zabusky and Barley (1997) found that many research scientists perceived themselves as neither identifying with their organization nor with their professional group. Instead, they found that many scientists existed in a position that "had no name...because it did not fit neatly into either the organization's or the scientific community's cultural map" (Zabusky & Barley, 1997: 392). Further, the authors found that such a position of liminal identification was strategically useful to these scientists. As they put it,

it was because the staff scientists identified with no group in particular that they could interact
more easily with people from various disciplines and professions, and so acquire information
that was unavailable to other participants. Thus, the scientists' liminality enabled ESA to
achieve what many constituents though was an unrealistic goal: the simultaneous production
of scientific knowledge, new technology, and industrial profit (Zabusky & Barley, 1997, p.
396).

Together, these social psychological findings suggest that individuals who wish
to maintain a coherent sense of self, but also to selectively distance and connect
themselves to dimensions of an organization's identity, may use within-organiza-
tion self-categorizations as a means affirming and communicating these self-per-
ceptions. Yet, while current theories of social identity allow for "weak" group or
organizational identifications (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), as well as the possibility
of identification with specific aspects of an organization's identity (Albert &
Whetten, 1985), these models do not allow for the simultaneous identification and
disidentification with a single organization. That is, they do not allow for what
might be called *schizo-identification* (Elsbach, 1999).

Intentionally Neutral Organizational Relationships

Finally, current frameworks that describe the relationship between organiza-
tional identities and individual self-concepts do not include or address the possi-
bility of intentionally, neutral relationships with organizations. At first glance,
neutrality or "lack of connectedness" between an individual and an organization's
identity might seem to be of little consequence to theorists and managers alike.
Such cognitions relate to those organizations one does not feel strongly about. Yet,
upon closer examination, one can identify a number of instances where such a lack
of both connectedness and disconnectedness is an important factor. First, salient
perceptions of neutrality or impartiality toward an organization can be critical to
individuals occupying decision-making roles such as arbitrators, judges, and jour-
nal editors. For example, being an impartial identifier with both baseball players
and their team owners might be viewed as a key requirement for arbitrating a pay
settlement between the players and owners. Individuals who act as arbitrators may
wish to convince opposing parties that they neither identify nor disidentify with
either party, and thus, can be viewed as an impartial decision-maker. Similarly, in
academic settings, journal editors who become known as impartial-identifiers
with a number of theoretical and methodological perspectives may receive a
greater number of manuscripts from authors writing on obscure themes, who
believe the editor's impartiality provides them with a fair chance of acceptance
compared to more mainstream work.

Second, there also may be rare cases in which organizations deliberately court
perceptions of "neutral-identification" from audiences. For example, in a study
of the California cattle industry (Elsbach, 1994), I found that individual cattle
ranches desired "neutral-identification" from members of the general public,
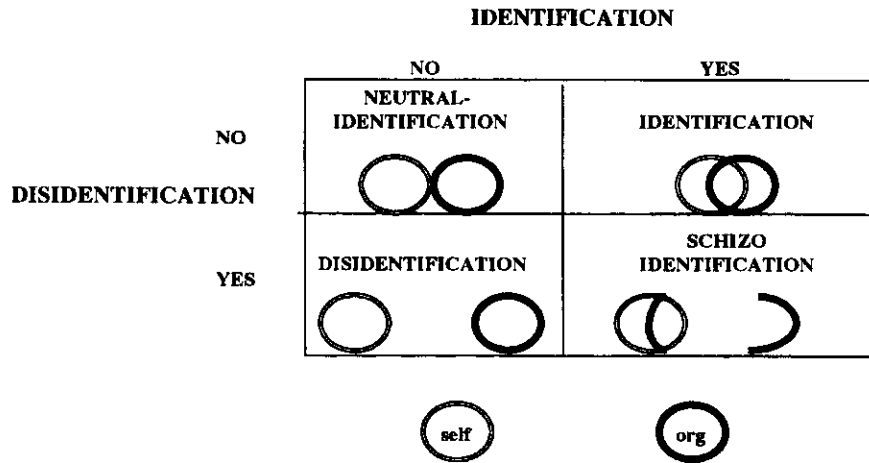
IDENTIFICATION

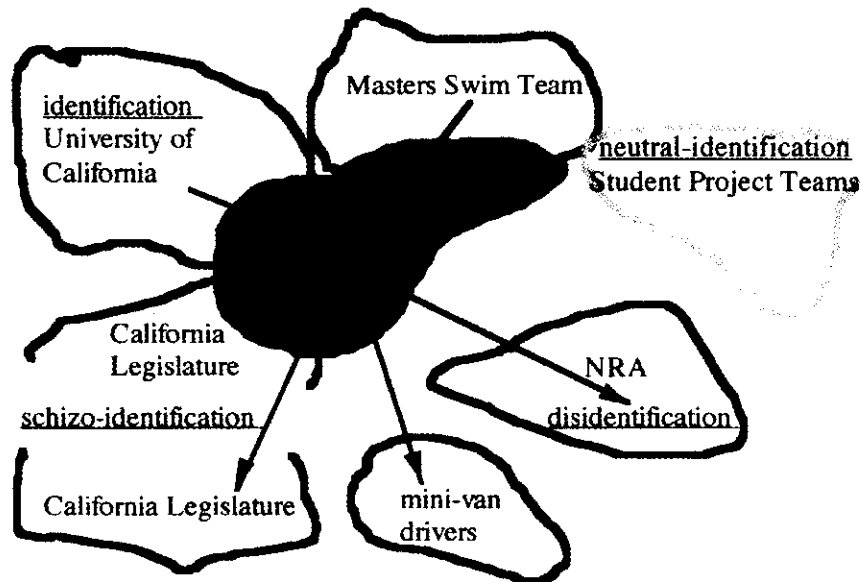*Figure 1.* Forms of Organizational Identification

preferring that consumers identify "cattle issues" with the Cattleman's Association, or the Beef Council, rather than with an individual ranch. Further, individual cattle ranchers contributed to a fund for an industry-wide advertising campaign (e.g., "Beef, it's what's for dinner") that did not identify individual cattle producers.

In both of the above cases, it is important to distinguish intentionally, neutral identification from apathy or a very low-level of identification. Neutral-identification, as it applies in these cases, represents a very specific state in which individuals deliberately maintain a position of impartiality, balancing between identification and disidentification. By contrast, individuals who just don't care about an organization or don't know about an organization might be called "non-identifiers."

Summary

In sum, the above discussion suggests that a more complete framework of organizational identification should explain relationships between individual and organizational identities that are negative, conflicting, and intentionally neutral, in addition to positive. In the following sections, I outline an expanded model of organizational identification that recognizes and incorporates such relationships. I then provide some illustrations of its application and implications for future research.

Figure 2.   Example of Social Identity Using the
Expanded Model of Organizational Identification

AN EXPANDED MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL
IDENTIFICATION

To begin to remedy the shortcomings outlined above, I propose an expanded model of organizational identification comprised of four forms of cognitive connectedness between individual and organizational identities: (1) organizational identification, (2) organizational disidentification, (3) organizational schizo-identification, and (4) organizational neutral-identification. These four forms of identification may be defined by their inclusion of positive, negative, or neutral relationships between individual and organizational identities. Thus, the expanded model recognizes the notion that an individual's identity is defined by what a person connects to, what a person disconnects from, and what a person neither connects to nor disconnects from.

Although these notions seem new to theories of social identity, they may be traced back to Heider's (1958) balance theory (i.e., cognitive balance is achieved through connections *and* disconnections between issues and people), and Weber's (1968) theory of emic identities (i.e., identification is the product of "consciousness of kind" *and* "consciousness of different"). An illustration of the expanded model is given in Figure 1. An illustration of an individual's self-concept as defined by the expanded model is given in Figure 2.

In the following sections, I explicate how each form of organizational identification might be defined and motivated, as well as some its potential consequences.

Organizational Identification

In the expanded model, *organizational identification* is defined as *a self-perception based on (1) a sense of active connection between one's identity and the identity of an organization, and (2) a positive relational categorization of oneself and the organization.* While this definition is generally equivalent to that in the established models, it is important to highlight two aspects of organizational identification that become more salient in the expanded model. First, the expanded model makes clear that identification is defined by an *active* connection between one's identity and the identity of the organization. Apathy toward an organization, which may have fallen into the category of "weak" organizational identification, is not considered identification, but rather, as noted above, might be called "non-identification."

Second, the expanded model highlights that organizational identification may be indicated by a variety of positive "relational categorizations" (Richardson, 1987) that denote a range of overlaps between individual and organizational identities. Identifications may range from informal and weak (e.g., colleagues, teammates) to formal and strong (e.g., advocates, members). This contrasts with previous models of organizational identification that have focused on categorizations that indicate strong and formal identifications (e.g., employees). Further, the recognition of weak identification provides an important distinction between identification and disidentification. As discussed below, organizational disidentification describes a very clear break between a person's and organization's identity that may not occur if only weak cognitive separation exists.

Organizational Disidentification

Organizational disidentification is defined as *a self-perception based on (1) a sense of active separation between one's identity and the identity of an organization, and (2) a negative relational categorization of oneself and the organization* (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 1998). As Elsbach and Bhattacharya (1998) note

> Organizational disidentification is indicated by the degree to which a person defines him or herself as <u>not having</u> the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization, which mirrors Dutton et al.'s, (1994, p. 239) definition of organizational identification (i.e., "the degree to which a person defines him or herself as having the same attributes that he or she believes define the organization"), and may be indicated by negative relational categorizations, such as "rivals," or "enemies."

Elsbach and Bhattacharya (1998) also identify a number of antecedents and consequences of organizational disidentification based on their study of disidentification with the National Rifle Association (NRA). In terms of antecedents, they

found that individuals were likely to disidentify with the NRA if they perceived that distancing themselves from the NRA's values and reputation would be identity enhancing. They also found that individuals who held stereotyped perceptions of NRA members based on limited personal experience were likely to disidentify with the organization. In terms of consequences, they found that individuals who claimed to disidentify with the NRA commonly carried out counter-organizational actions (e.g., boycotting products, writing letters to newspaper editors about the NRA's faults), and made public claims (e.g., self-identified themselves to family and friends as anti-NRA).

While these findings represent a first attempt to uncover the processes underlying organizational disidentification, they highlight some important relationships between the processes of identification and disidentification. In particular, these findings about antecedents of disidentification suggest that it is most likely if audiences hold a simple, stereotyped view of the organization that clearly runs counter to important values and ideals. In constrast theorists and researchers have argued that organizational identification is likely for members if they have a more complex perception of the organization, some parts of which affirm some of their values and ideals (Dutton et al., 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). These findings suggest that disidentification is not a simple opposite to identification. That is, organizational identification appears to be predicted by the perception that at least partial connection to positively viewed dimensions of a complex organizational identity is enhancing to a person's social identity. Organizational disidentification is predicted by the perception that clear disconnection from simple, stereotypically negative organizational identities is enhancing to a person's social identity.

Illustrations of Organizational Disidentification

Anecdotal evidence provides some of the most convincing support for the concept of organizational disidentification. Public claims of "not" being an organizational member or supporter are common, especially in circumstances in which mistaken identification with an undesirable group is likely. One of my favorite examples of this phenomena is an article written by a Salt Lake City, Utah, columnist about "non-Mormons" residing in this predominately Mormon city. As the author notes, "Furious non-Mormons (Furnons) are not interested in a live and let live policy with Mormons. Mormons are wrong, wrong, wrong....Rabid non-Mormons (Rabnons) are a distinct minority among non- Mormons....Rabnons cry that anything even remotely connected with Mormonism is out-an-out evil (Kirby, 1995, p. D2).

In other cases, recent ex-members of an organization may want to underline their new status as disidentifiers. Former president George Bush's public destruction of his NRA membership card, following comments by the then NRA president comparing federal agents to Nazi stormtroopers, was a self-identifying

gesture displaying his disidentification with the organization (Elsbach & Bhatta-charya, 1998).

Finally, some individuals may want to distance themselves from an organization as a means of identity-enhancement. For example, members of more conservative environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club, might define themselves by claiming "we're not Earth First!" as a means of distancing themselves from more radical groups. Similarly, individuals might want to invoke "relational categorizations" (Brewer & Gardner, 1996) between themselves and the organization that identify them as "enemies" or "rivals." In this vein, Scott McNealy, CEO of Sun Microsystems, described his relationship with his competitor, Microsoft, based in Redmond, Oregon, as rivals in a "Star Wars-like" battle: "There's two camps. Those in Redmond who live on the Death Star, and the rest of us, the rebel forces" (Levy, 1996, p. 56). Further, McNealy and several of his peers defined themselves as "Anti-Bills," as a means of displaying disidentification with Microsoft's founder and CEO, Bill Gates.

A final example of disidentification comes from research on alienation among early adolescents (Newman & Newman, 1976). These theorists suggest that early adolescents face a conflict between a need to define their own self-concept and pressures for specific group identifications from family, peers, and schoolmates. If adolescents respond to this conflict by identifying with a set of groups that positively affirms their self-concept, healthy development and personal growth is predicted. If, however, an adolescent does not identify with available social groups (e.g., because parents forbid it or no social group is welcoming), he or she may remain alienated from peers and family. Newman and Newman (1976, p. 268) suggest, however, that such alienation may also be the result of personal choice, i.e., "where the individual looks over the existing groups and does not find one that would really meet his own personal needs." In such cases, the individual might be viewed as a group disidentifier, deliberating choosing alienation over identification.

Organizational Schizo-Identification

Organizational *schizo-identification* occurs when *an individual simultaneously identifies and disidentifies with an organization's identity* Elsbach (1999). A person who schizo-identifies with an organization would score high on both organizational identification and organizational disidentification scales. Those scales, however, would have to allow for identifications and disidentifications to be specific to one or more *dimensions* of the organization's identity. For example, instead of saying "the organization's successes are my success," as an indication of organizational identification, a schizo-identifier might say "*some* of the organization's successes are my successes," or more specifically, "the organization's successes *on environmental protection* are my successes." Similarly, disidentification for a schizo-identifier might be indicated by statements like, "the organization's failures on tax breaks for the rich are my successes."

Schizo-identification appears to be an adaptive cognitive response by committed employees who find themselves linked to an organization whose identity seemingly embodies both cherished values and the opposite of those values (Elsbach, 1999). Further, schizo-identifications appears to be most readily used in organizations that have identities and reputations that are also "schizophrenic" in nature (e.g., the California State Legislature is defined by the often conflicting ideals public policy and partisan politics). Such split or "schizo" organizational identities and reputations allow members to similarly split their social identifications with the organization in ways that adaptively connect their self-concepts to a positive organizational identity and distance it from a negative one.

Illustrations of Organizational Schizo-Identification

In my study of California legislative staff members (Elsbach, 1998) I found that staffers used a number of self-identification tactics (e.g., self-affirmations, identity-stands, and display of physical identity-markers) to publicly affirm both identifications and disidentifications with the legislature's organizational identity, thus displaying schizo-identification with the legislature. The particular combination of identification and disidentification displays helped to categorize them into one of several widely-known types of schizo-identifiers who mimicked the schizophrenic nature of the organization's identity and reputation in their own self-identifications. For example, I describe the "policy wonk" as " a staffer dedicated to and identified with policy ideals and policy-making in line with personal ideals (e.g., environmental policy), and distanced from and disidentified with political maneuvering among members that often compromised those ideals (e.g., campaign politics, and personal dealmaking)." One policy wonk displayed his split identification with the legislature in the following way:

> You know, there's a certain segment of the policy-making process that's pretty sleazy, pretty questionable. And I do my best to stay away from that. I don't like to work on those bills. Most of the bills that I've worked on are not "juice bills," as that term is used. That is, they don't involve big insurance companies; they don't involve trial lawyers; they don't involve horse racing or gambling or liquor licenses. So people don't get a lot of money for them. The *California Journal* came up with the *juice index*, which is a very clever way of measuring the unmeasurable. They looked at the campaign contributions for each member and then clustered them by committee, and then divided the total by the number of members, and that was your juice index. And at that time, there were 22 policy committees and mine came in at 22 out of 22. And I was proud to point out that I was working for the least juiced committee of that index. At the time, that was one of my defenses to criticisms about excessive campaign contributions: "Hey, no, wait a minute, let me tell you who I work for...the guys I work for can't even raise money!"

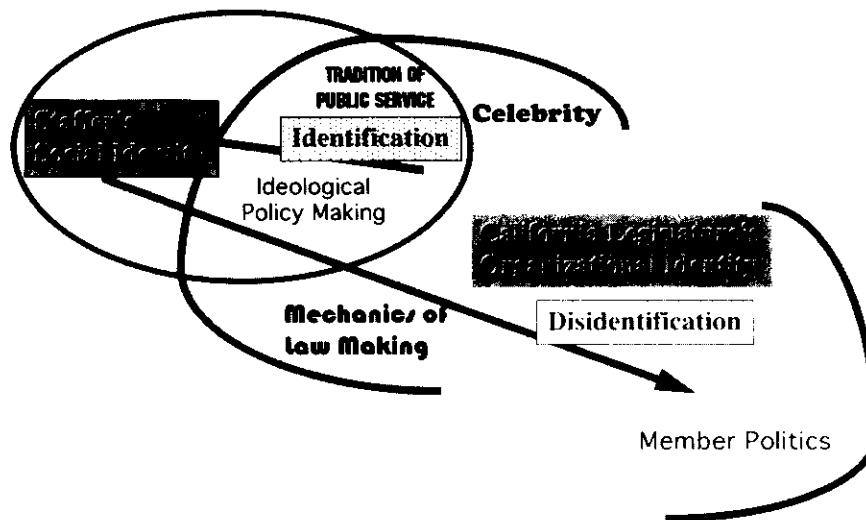An illustration of this schizo-identifier type—the "policy wonk"—is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Schizo-Identification by "Policy Wonk" Legislative Staffer

By contrast, I define the "political hack" as a staffer who "identified with member politics, especially forwarding the policy ideals of their member or their party…but disidentified with the mundaneness of the mechanics of law making—referring to such a job as "being like the furniture" (Elsbach 1999, p. 25). As one self-defined "political hack" put it:

> We all kind of refer to ourselves as team [senator X]. So, when things happen that aren't so good, that's not really who you are. You're team [senator X]. I mean, a lot of staff seem like the furniture. They're going to stay and a new member will walk through the door and they will just adopt their point of view. I'm not like that. I just don't really feel like I could just take on the political views of any member.

Organizational Neutral-Identification

The last category of organizational identification is also the most obscure and hard to locate: neutral-identification. *Neutral-identification* is defined as *a self-perception based on the explicit absence of both identification and disidentification with an organization's identity.* That is, neutral-identification indicates an intentionally impartial relationship with an organization's identity (good or bad). People who neutrally identify with an organization would score low on both identification and disidentification scales. Neutral-identifiers would also have a difficult time defining themselves in terms of relational categories that include the organization. They are neither supporters nor rivals of the organization.

Although neutral-identification is associated with weak affiliations with an organization, it may still be salient in a person's consciousness. Fiske and Taylor (1991) suggest that salient information is typically novel, unusual, visually dominant, or goal relevant. In line with these findings, I suggest that organizational neutral-identification may be most likely to occur in situations where it is goal relevant, such as the cases of an impartial arbitrator, mediator, or editor described above. In these cases, neutral-identification might be made explicit through self-identifications, such as neutral language, attention to procedural fairness, and adherence to formal guidelines that are designed to be impartial. Neutral-identification may also be carefully guarded and encouraged by self-imposed detachment (e.g., limiting one's social affiliation with any one institution, remaining ignorant of institutional ranking surveys).

Illustrations of Organizational Neutral-Identification

Neutral-identification with organizations might be best illustrated in research on *procedural justice* and fairness (Tyler et al., 1997). Researchers in this field suggest that attention to fair, procedural norms in making and explaining decisions is critical to audiences' acceptance of those decisions and trust in the decision makers. Further, this research suggests that appearing "neutral" or "impartial" are key aspects of procedural justice impressions (Lind et al., 1993).

For example, in a study examining subsidiary managers' perceptions of fairness in dealing with their companies' head office in strategic planning, Kim and Mauborgne (1993) found that trust in the head office and perceptions of fairness were most strongly related to "bilateral communications" between the subsidiary and head office, and a perception that the head office was "consistent" in its application of decision procedures across subsidiary units. Both of these factors might be viewed as suggesting an impartiality toward individual subsidiary units. In another study, Lind and colleagues (1993) found that litigants in a recently arbitrated lawsuit found that perceptions of process fairness, which included a perception of "arbitrator neutrality" (i.e., the arbitrator examined all relevant case facts on both sides) were important to predicting perceptions of procedural justice and acceptance of the arbitrator's decision. Finally, studies examining "due-process" performance appraisal systems, which include consistent and impartial application of performance evaluations, have shown that such impartiality significantly increases employees perceptions of fairness, evaluations of their managers, and intentions to remain with the organization (Taylor et al., 1995).

In all of the above studies, neutrality or impartiality suggested a lack of affiliation with competing parties, as well as a lack of opposition to these parties. By contrast, if group affiliation by a decision-maker is detected, perceptions of neutrality may be lowered. For example, in a study examining group affiliation and perceived neutrality, Giacobbe-Miller (1995) found that managers, who believed

that third party arbitrators identified with labor groups, perceived the arbitrators as less neutral than did laborers, who perceived no group affiliation by arbitrators. Together, these findings suggest that displaying neither connection nor disconnection to organizations might be a way of signaling one's neutral-identification with those organizations.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE EXPANDED MODEL

The expanded model of organizational identification presented above provides individuals with the ability to define themselves in terms of more *distinct and specific* organizational associations than do previous models. By allowing people to specify similarity, distinctness, and neutrality between their identities and the identities of organizations, this model may explain more completely the range of strategic cognitive adaptations people use to sustain positive or affirming social identities. Further, the expanded model highlights many features of identification that are not included in previous models, suggesting that disidentification, schizo-identification, and neutral-identification are distinct constructs—rather than extensions of identification. Some of theoretical and practical implications of these features are discussed below.

Theoretical Implications

First, the expanded model recognizes processes of disidentification as distinct from low levels of identification. Further, disidentification is not a simple, mirror opposite of identification. Organizational disidentification appears to be indicated by more extreme and clear cut boundaries between a person and an organization than is identification indicated by extreme and clear cut connections. That is, there is no "partial disidentification" with any one aspect of an organization. By contrast, a person may partially identify with an organization, or even with some aspects of an organization (e.g., I partially identify with the teaching aspect of my university, but it is not a strong part of my identity). In the same manner, complete identification is probably rare (e.g., the case of a founder and his or her organization—such as Mary Kay and Mary Kay Cosmetics—may be an example of complete identification), while complete disidentification may be common (e.g., many people completely disidentify with the KKK).

Second, the expanded model suggests that identification and disidentification have different antecedents. Identification appears to be most strongly predicted by the prestige and status of the organization's identity, which are related to *self-enhancements* motivations by the identifier. By contrast, disidentification appears to be predicted by identity-threats that arise when a person believes he or she may be mistakenly linked to a stereotypically, negative organization. These disidentification antecedents appear to be related to *self-verification*

motivations by the disidentifier (i.e., the need to verify the absence of a negative identification). Of course, both self-enhancement and self-verification motives may be predictors of identification and disidentification. Yet, the focus on stereotype threats as a predictor of disidentification suggests that self-verification, rather than self-enhancement is a primary motive. In support of this notion, Elsbach and Bhattacharya (1998) found many examples of people who found the civil libertarian views of the NRA to be positive, but nevertheless disidentified with the organization because of its over-riding stereotype as a bastion of militant, gun-lovers These individuals were willing to give up some self-enhancing aspects of organizational identification to affirm their anti-gun views. Similarly, in their study of the *Business Week* rankings, Elsbach and Kramer (1996) found that some of the faculty of the University of Chicago appeared to disidentify with the rankings because they thought it threatened their identity as a "research oriented" school, even though it enhanced their general status by ranking them as a top-tier school.

Third, the expanded model recognizes the possibility of simultaneous identifications and disidentifications with the same organization, that is, it recognizes the process of schizo-identification. Schizo-identification appears to be based on the integration of self-enhancement and self-verification motives (i.e., connection to self-enhancing positives, and disconnection from self-threatening negatives). In this manner, schizo-identification explains more complex forms of identification are required of individuals working in organizations with complex, and internally contradictory identities.

Finally, the model discusses the idea of intentionally, neutral-identification, which has not been discussed before. Existing models of identification suggest that very low levels of identification might occur if a person is ignorant of or apathetic toward an organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Yet, these models have not discussed the existence of a form of identification that occupies the precarious point between identification and disidentification, in which a person intentionally balances cognitive connections and disconnections with an organization to maintain a stance of impartiality. Given the importance of impartiality and neutrality in dealing with competing groups, it seems natural that models of identification should recognize this special form of identification. While procedural justice theories have eluded to its existence, social identity theories have not explicitly recognized neutral-identification as a distinct and important form of identification.

In sum, the expanded model describes several new cognitive processes that are not easily explained with existing models of organizational identification. A comparison of the expanded versus existing frameworks of organizational identification is given in Table 2.

Practical Implications

In the following sections, I review some of the practical implications of the expanded model for individuals and organizations.

Table 2. Expanded versus Existing Frameworks of
Organizational Identification

	Existing Frameworks	*Expanded Model*
Definitions of self vis-à-vis Organization's Identity	• Definition of self-concept based on positive links between a person's and organization's identity.	• Definition of self-concept based on positive and/or negative links between person's and organiza-tion's identity, or con-science and intentional absence of positive or negative links
Primary Cognitive Processes	• Self-Categorizations • Social Comparisons	• Self-Categorizations • Social Comparisons • Stereotyping • Buffering • Splitting
Antecedent Conditions	• Distinctive Organizational Identity • Prestigious Organizational Identity • Complex Organizational Identity	• Distinctive Organizational Identity • Prestigious Organizational Identity • Complex Organizational Identity • Narrowly Stereotyped Org. Identity • Low Status Organizational Identity • Internally Incongruent Identity • Competing Organizational Identities
Individual Benefits	• Self-Enhancement • Affiliation and Safety	• Self- Enhancement • Incongruent Self-Verifica-tion and Self-Enhancement • Affiliation and Safety • Adaptive Decoupling
Organizational Benefits	• Employee Commitment/loyalty • Extra role behaviors by Employees	• Employee Commitment/Loyalty • Extra role behaviors by Employees • Adaptability of Org. Identity • Retention of Dialectic Org. Purposes • Enhances perceptions of fairness

Individual Level Implications of the Expanded Model:
Balancing Self-verification vs. Self-enhancement

Recent research on "socio-motivational" perspectives of self-categorization (Oakes et al., 1994; Yzerbyt et al.,1997) suggests that individuals may use

self-identification claims as a means of strategically protecting and affirming established social identities (Ellemers & van Knippenberg, 1997). Further, researchers have shown that, at times, individuals will prefer to affirm an established identity (i.e., engage in self-verification) versus a positive identity (i.e., engage in self-enhancement) (Swann, 1988). Established social identities (Ellemers & van Knippenberg, 1997). Further, researchers have shown that, at times, individuals will prefer to affirm an established identity (i.e., engage in self-verification) vs. a positive identity (i.e., engage in self-enhancement) (Swann, 1987).

This strategic nature of self-identifications is most evident when individuals face a conflict between emphasizing identifications that are self-enhancing versus those that are self-verifying (Swann et al., 1987). Researchers have found, for example, that if the distinctiveness of an ingroup identity is threatened (e.g., by reports that audiences confuse it with an outgroup), ingroup identifiers will be willing to accentuate *negative* ingroup traits as a means of verifying their established identity and distancing their group from the outgroup (Mlicki & Ellemers, 1996). In other cases, researchers have found that if a group identity is mislabeled in an extreme way (e.g., all environmentalists are vegetarians), group identifiers may attempt to distance themselves from this caricature to affirm their previous identity (e.g., by conspicuously consuming a cheeseburger at a "Save the Whales" rally) (see Swann, Pelham, & Chidester, 1988 for other examples). These findings suggest that people strive to meet self-verification goals independent of motives for self-enhancement goals (Swann et al., 1992), and that meeting such competing demands may require an adaptive and flexible social identity.

Due to its inclusion of distancing mechanisms, such as disidentification and schizo-identification, the expanded model of organizational identification helps to better justify and explain individual's strategic use organizational identifications to balance needs for self-enhancement and self-verification. Such mechanisms may also help people deal with a number of organizational issues, including distinctiveness threats, status threats, collective narcissism, liminal identities, and organizational identity transitions.

Dealing with distinctiveness threats.   A growing amount of psychological research suggests that group distinctiveness is an important aspect of group identity and its attractiveness to potential group members (Brewer, 1991; Turner, 1987). There is also evidence that external perceptions of intergroup similarity may threaten members' group identification by suggesting that the group is not all that unique and distinctive. In response, members who strongly identify with a group have been shown to "accentuate their prototypically as group members in order to reassert their common identity as members of a distinct group" (Doosje & Ellemers, 1997, p. 267).

In their study of business school members' responses to the *Business Week* rankings, Elsbach and Kramer (1996), used a "microscope" metaphor to describe how individual members might adaptively and strategically focus attention on social

categorizations of their school that placed it in the most favorable comparison group. For example, they describe how using a low-level of magnification to show their school in relation to other schools might be used to highlight both the" league" it was in (e.g., top public schools), and to distinguish it from leagues in which it was not a member and should not be placed in mistakenly (e.g., top private schools).

Using the expanded model of social identification presented here, these organizational self-categorizations by business members might be viewed as affirming identifications with desirable comparison groups, and disidentification from undesirable comparison groups. That is, defining one's desired comparison group is a means of defining the organizations with which one wishes his or her organization to be identified, as well as the organizations from which one wishes his or her organization to be disidentified. In this manner, the expanded model of social identification incorporates both the inclusive and exclusive dimensions of social categorization and social comparison (Turner, 1985).

Dealing with stereotype threats. Claude Steele's work on stereotype threat suggests that individuals who feel they may confirm a negative group stereotype on one dimension may attempt to counter that threat by distancing themselves from all dimensions of the stereotyped group, even if some of those dimensions are positive (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Stereotype threats may be especially salient to organizational members, such as legislative staffers, whose professional identity is unknown or vague and whose professional roles are subject to well-known stereotypes. In these situations, categorization research suggests that observers may use an automatic categorization process in which they match the person to a stereotype of an organization member (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990).

Notions of schizo-identification and neutral-identification, however, provide alternative responses to distancing oneself from all dimensions of an organization in an attempt to counter a stereotype threat. Individuals may use schizo-identification to selectively distance themselves from the negative dimensions of the stereotype, while maintaining a connection to more positive dimensions. Such a response may be dependent on individual's perception of the organization's identity and reputation as multi-faceted or "split" in nature. Yet, because most organizations are not singularly identified, schizo-identification may be readily available to most organization members.

In a less overt manner, individuals may use neutral-identification to provide a cognitive buffer between their identities and the identity of the stereotyped group. Such impartial cognitions may help individuals avoid the dissonance associated with active disidentification from a group to which they clearly belong, but also help them avoid the full force of the stereotype that threatens their positive self-concept.

Dealing with dissonance in self-presentation. Recent research has examined how individuals cope with self-presentations that are counter to their known self (Banjai & Prentice, 1994). Interestingly, this research suggests that individuals can display disidentification cues at the same time they are engaging in identifying behaviors. For example, Fleming and Rudman (1993) found that individuals reading a counter-attitudinal speech against affirmative action in the presence of African-American audiences displayed both verbal and non-verbal cues (e.g., disclaimers, body-language) that communicated their discomfort and distance from their espoused views. These behaviors were found to reduce the speakers' dissonance about the speech and reduce their attitude change in favor of the speech. Similarly, Goffman (1959, p. 109) describes the codes of conduct engaged in by stigmatized individuals include a "desirable pattern of revealing and concealing." As he notes, "The stigmatized individual is asked to act so as to imply neither that his burden is heavy nor that bearing it has made him different from us; at the same time he must keep himself at that remove from us which ensures our painlessly being able to confirm this belief about him" (Goffman, 1959, p. 122).

In the same manner, organizational schizo-identification cues might be displayed to make clear both identifications and disidentifications with an organization. Such cues displayed simultaneously might reinforce and specify one's social identification within the organization. For example, a person displaying both "Up with USA Soccer" and a " Down with Coach Samson" (a coach recently accused of sexual harassment) bumper stickers might be seen more clearly as a supporter of the USA soccer players, specifically, and not a supporter of the U.S. soccer organization as a whole.

Organization-Level Implications of the Expanded Model:
Managing the Evolution of Organizational Identity

While original definitions of organizational identity included the term "enduring" in their definitions (Albert & Whetten, 1985), these definitions allowed for the adaptation of organizational identities to environmental demands. More recently, there has been a growing interest in the complex nature of organizational identities and the ability of organizational leaders to proactively change them (Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). Empirical studies have shown that individuals may strategically adapt their perceptions of organizational identity to maintain positive self-perceptions as organizational members (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). Further, researchers have begun to chart lasting changes in organizational identities as a result of intentional managerial action (Reger et al., 1994). The expanded model of organizational identification proposed above continues this trend by defining the cognitive strategies by which individuals cope with complex and evolving organizational identities. I discuss two of these coping strategies below.

Dealing with collective narcissism.   Brown's (1997) discussion of narcissistic behaviors at the group and organizational levels suggests that ego-defensive behaviors can be collectively enacted to protect the group's or organization's identity and in turn, protect the social identities of their members. Brown proposes that defensive behaviors such as denial of organizational faults or misdeeds (Keller, 1989), rationalization of controversial organizational behaviors (Ross & Staw, 1993), and external attribution of organizational failures (Bettman & Weitz, 1983; Staw et al., 1983; Salancik & Meindl, 1984) are designed to protect the collective's positive identity by cognitively distancing it from negative events and the organizational dimensions responsible for them. For example, Ross and Staw (1993) describe how the Long Island Lighting Company used defensive rationalizations in describing its construction of the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant that were so inaccurate that the company was indicted for fraud.

Explaining such collective narcissism from the standpoint of previous theories of social identity is, however, somewhat difficult. Prior theories do not address the active distancing or denial of organizational identity dimensions from employees' social identities. As noted earlier, they only allow for organizational identification to be "weak," but not wholly and actively negative. By contrast, the expanded model of social identification offered here might describe narcissistic behaviors by collectives as means of maintaining adaptive disidentifications, schizo-identifications, or neutral-identifications between employees and their organizations. In situations where employees wish to be seen as professionals, completely distinct from their organization (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), their cognitions might be best understood as organizational disidentifications. In situations where connections to at least part of the organization's identity is desired, schizo-identification provides for the greatest distancing between one's self-concept and specific, undesirable dimensions of the organization's identity. Finally, in situations where employees wish to avoid any emotional stress in relation to potential organizational identity threats, cognitions of neutral-identification may be observed. Thus, the expanded model provides a lens through which collective narcissism may be viewed and described.

Dealing with complex and changing organizational identities.   Albert   and Whetten (1985, p. 270) opened the discussion about the potential complexity of organizational identifications with their examination of possible of hybrid organizational identities, "composed of two or more types that would not normally be expected to go together." They defined two types or organizational identities: (1) the holographic identity ("in which each internal unit exhibits the properties of the organization as a whole") and the ideographic identity ("in which each internal unit exhibits only one identity") (Albert &Whetten, 1985, p. 271). Further, Albert and Whetten propose that these hybrid identities presented various costs and benefits for organizational managers whose task it was to manage the organization's identity as a means of gaining commitment from organizational members. As Albert and Whetten (1985, p. 272) summarize:

Members of ideographic organizations should be better prepared to monitor diverse environ-
mental conditions and formulate the appropriate recommendations for adaptive organizational
modifications. On the other hand, the obvious disadvantage of the ideodentic organization is
the relative difficulty it has gaining commitment from its members for a given course of
action....Hence, while the holographic organization has less diversity to draw upon in formu-
lating a "correct" plan of action, once a plan has been proposed leaders will be able to draw
upon common characteristics across all units as the basis for establishing consensus.

Albert and Whetten (1985, p. 276) also introduced a model describing the evo-
lution of organizational identity over the life cycle of an organization. They sug-
gested that an organization's identity may evolve to "exploit the opportunities of
an increasingly complex and changing environment, as well as to cope with
increases in environmentally imposed constraints and regulations."

Yet, while this model examines the complexity of organizational identities, it
does not address how members' organizational identifications may interact with
changing organizational identities over time. Further, it does not address how
members or audiences of organizations may react to proactive and strategic iden-
tity adaptations by organizational manages.

For example, members that, at one time, identify with an organization as a whole,
may adjust their social identities if they discover that the organization has gained
ties to another organization with which they disidentify. Similarly, organizational
identifiers may come to disidentify with an organization if they find its leadership
disidentifies with an organization with which they identify. Such discoveries may
result in complete disidentification or partial, schizo-identification with the orga-
nization. As a case in point, former president George Bush publicly disidentified
himself with the National Rifle Association after the NRA's then president publicly
disidentified with Fire Arms and Tobacco, Federal Agents, a government
organization with which Bush identified (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 1998).

In other cases, organizations that are proactively changing their identity due to
a merger, acquisition, or management directive may have to get members to give
up old identifications before they can embrace new ones (e.g., following recent
airline and bank mergers). Understanding the dynamics of disidentification may
help them make this identity-transition. For example, in fostering customer iden-
tification with their innovative identity, the car company Saturn used the slogan,
"A different kind of car company. A different kind of car," to distinguish it from
their parent company, General Motors. Their commercials and print advertising
also spent considerable effort separating the company from most people's stereo-
type of a car company as big, impersonal, and adversarial. In one advertisement,
an African-American sales representative talks about how his father was treated
unfairly by a big-company car salesman in the 1950s and how his approach at Sat-
urn is designed to be in distinct contrast to this approach. All of these tactics by the
company appear designed to help audiences to disidentify with the out-dated and
undesirable identity of the "traditional car company." Such disidentification may

make it easier for audiences to then identify with the "different kind of car company" Saturn professes to be.

Finally, organizations that have many different, and incongruous product lines (e.g. conglomerates like Phillip Morris who sell both cigarettes and cookies) may find that schizo-identification is a means by which employees can cope with inconsistent organizational identities. Understanding this type of identification may be important to maintaining employee satisfaction and loyalty. For example, in the Saturn case described above, employees of this new branch of General Motors (GM) may find it helpful to maintain disidentifications with GM's older, more embattled manufacturing operations (e.g., Detroit-based operations for Chevrolet), while identifying only with the new Saturn operations in Tennessee. Such schizo-identification might help employees distance themselves from previous organizational identities, while remaining employed by, essentially, the same organization.

Dealing with perceptions of intra-organizational fairness. As noted earlier, maintaining perceptions of procedural justice and fairness have been linked to images of impartiality or neutrality (Tyler et al., 1997). As a consequence, organizational managers who must maintain a perception of neutrality with competing, internal interest groups may benefit from understanding how neutral-identification is perceived and maintained. For example, in a recent documentary, Mirzoeff (1997) described the difficult task of impartial treatment by management of London's Royal Opera House in dealing with competing demands from the Royal Ballet, and the Royal Opera. In this case study, the Opera House General Director Jeremy Isaacs discusses the difficulty of maintaining a perception among the Ballet Board and Opera Board, that he does not identify or disidentify with either party. In this case, neutral-identification was signaled by labeling himself a manager of the "House" as a whole, rather than a manger of the Opera or the Ballet. In this way he did not link himself to either of the companies, but also did not disparage either. This example suggests that identification with a broader, more encompassing unit may be one means of signaling neutral-identification with competing units at a lower level (Kramer & Brewer, 1984).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented an expanded model of organizational identification that includes and addresses the possibility of cognitive connections between individuals and organizations that are negative, conflicted, and neutral, in addition to positive. This model confirms and expands existing theories of social identity by explicitly recognizing:

1. That social identities are both inclusive and exclusive; defining both what a person is and is not.

2. That organizational identifications may be as complex as the identities of the organization's to which they are connected.

3. That environmental conditions and proactive managerial actions may affect the form of individuals' cognitive connections to an organization, and that the conditions that lead to identification are not the same as those that lead to disidentification, schizo-identification, or neutral-identification.

4. That the intentional absence of cognitive connection or disconnection between and individual's and an organization's identity represents an important part of the self-concept for individuals who are required to be neutral or impartial toward competing organizations.

5. That individual adaptations to changing and complex organizational identities may occur through a series of identification steps that include conflicted identifications (e.g., schizo-identifications) and neutral-identifications.

It is my hope that this chapter will serve as a starting point and catalyst for future work on organizational identification that is based on this broader perception of cognitive relationships between individuals and their organizations.

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