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EXPLAINING VARIATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY CATEGORIZATION

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ABSTRACT

In explaining why constituent groups often vary in their perceptions of the most salient aspects of an organization's identity, existing research has drawn, almost exclusively, on social identity research and self-enhancement motives. This research suggests that when different organizational identity categorizations are enhancing to some groups but not others, variation in organizational identity perceptions arises. In this paper, by contrast, we explore the role that unmotivated or "spontaneous" cognitions may also play in influencing variation in constituents' organizational identity categorizations. Based on data from a study of U.S. business school constituents, we develop a dual path model through which both motivated and spontaneous processes influence the different organizational identity categorizations constituent groups find to be most salient. We discuss both the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical frameworks of organizational identity have long suggested that constituent groups may differ in their perceptions of the most central aspects of an organization's identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985). More recently, empirical research has provided support for this notion by documenting the presence of variation in identity perceptions across an organization's constituent groups (e.g., Glynn, 2000; Elsbach, 2001; Foreman and Whetten, 2002; Corley, 2004). For example, Glynn's (2000) study of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, revealed that musicians defined the organization's identity, primarily, in terms of its artistic mission, while administrators defined it in terms of its business objectives. While these different camps within the Symphony Orchestra recognized that the organization had different dimensions to its identity, they disagreed about which (i.e., art or business) was most central or salient to its identity.

To explain the cause of differences in organizational identity perceptions, organizational researchers have largely drawn from social identity research, which focuses on self-enhancement motives of organizational constituents (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg & Terry, 2000). This research suggests that constituent group members often choose to focus on specific organizational identity dimensions, or "identity categorizations," (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996) that are particularly enhancing to their self-esteem (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Put simply, group members choose to identify with, and thus perceive as salient, the specific aspects of an organization's identity that reflect most positively on themselves (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Glynn, 2000; Elsbach, 2001; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). This theory suggests that when different identity categorizations are enhancing to some groups, and not to others, variation in perceptions of the most salient identity categorizations that define an organization will arise.

Yet, focusing solely on self-enhancement motives to understand the nature and cause of variation

in organizational identity perceptions is problematic for at least three reasons. First, extant frameworks of organizational identity cannot explain why some constituents have been shown to focus on organizational identity categorizations that are not self-enhancing (or even self-diminishing) in their identity perceptions. For example, in their study of the *Business Week* rankings of U.S. Business Schools, Elsbach and Kramer (1996) found that, even though identity categorizations such as “public institution” or “research institution” did not enhance a business school’s ranking (and in fact were typically related to lower *Business Week* rankings), faculty and administrative members of several schools maintained these identity categorizations as salient to the organization’s identity. Similarly, in her study of organizational identity perceptions among law and beverage firms, Brickson (2005) found that some organizational constituents regarded negatively valenced categorizations such as “not caring,” “not community oriented,” and “disorganized,” as salient aspects of their organization’s identity. These observations suggest the presence of some mechanism besides self-enhancement motives that influences which organizational identity categorizations constituents find most salient.

Second, a focus on self-enhancement has arguably limited the way that researchers have approached the issue of studying variation in organizational identity perceptions. Most studies have focused on disagreements regarding the general *form* of the organization (e.g., Elsbach, 2001; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Humphreys & Brown, 2002)--what King and Whetten (2008) term “higher-order” identity categorizations. An example of such disagreement is when a university’s administrative staff views the organization as a business, while its faculty views it as a church (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Such value-laden disagreements are often thought to stem from the fundamentally different social identities and value systems (and the different organizational

categorizations that most positively reflect on these) of different professional groups within an organization (Glynn, 2000).

In contrast, little attention has been given to variation in organizational identity categorizations that are less value-laden, such as variation in the *within-form* identity categorizations which establish what is most distinctive about the organization (e.g., its culture) relative to similar others (King and Whetten, 2008). Within-form categorizations are a core element of an organization's identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985) and disagreement regarding these could lead to conflict over how decisions should be made and what behaviors different constituents view as most appropriate in a given situation. By studying within-form categorizations, researchers are likely to consider a broader range of differences in perceptions of the same organization's identity among constituents. As a result, they may develop a broader understanding of the drivers of variation in organizational identity perceptions.

Finally, a focus on self-enhancement motives for explaining variation in organizational identity perceptions does not fully explain why constituent groups find only *some* of the many available positive identity categorizations for an organization to be salient. As an illustration, in one of the few studies to examine variation in lower-order identity categorizations, Corley (2004) found that lower-level employees in a technology services firm were more likely to focus on categorizations related to organizational culture (e.g., a Branding Agent claimed "we're customer focused" when asked "who are you as an organization?"). In contrast, Corley found that senior leaders were more likely to focus on categorizations related to organizational strategy (e.g., "we're high growth"). Both of these identity categorizations (i.e., "customer focused" and "high growth"), however, are enhancing to *both* senior leaders and operational employees. Thus, self-enhancement motives alone do not explain why each group chose the specific, identity categorizations that they did. As with the

non-enhancing identity categorizations discussed above, these findings suggest that some mechanism other than (or in addition to) self-enhancement motives may be influencing these groups' choice of salient organizational identity categorizations.

These unexplained findings represent a significant gap in theories of organizational identity. At the same time, as we explain in more detail below, most existing identity research ignores a rich psychological literature on the role of *unmotivated* or “spontaneous” cognitions in perception (Oakes, 1987; Medin et.al., 1997; Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998). Such research holds that, when assessing a target that may be categorized in multiple ways, individual perceivers are more likely to focus on a given categorization if they have frequent experience with that categorization or with category-relevant issues (Medin, et.a., 1997; Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998). This research suggests that identity categorizations can become “chronically accessible” (Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998) because they are encountered frequently during one’s everyday activities and, in turn, strongly influence one’s perceptions.

Despite evidence of the importance of spontaneous mechanisms such as chronic accessibility in shaping perception, however, organizational identity researchers have not studied their potential role in explaining perceptions of organizational identity. As a result, we argue that a theoretical framework that incorporates insights from both motivated and spontaneous cognitions may significantly improve existing understanding of the nature and cause of variation in organizational identity perceptions across different organizational constituents. To more clearly position a research study that may lead to such a framework, we next review the main insights provided by psychological research on motivated versus spontaneous categorization as drivers of identity categorizations.

Psychological Research on Categorization Motives

As noted earlier, the motivated cognition perspective provides the basis for most social identity theories (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hogg & Terry, 2000). This perspective argues that needs for self-enhancement cause individuals to associate with positively-viewed groups. Further, social identity theorists suggest that individuals already associated with groups or organizations may deliberately choose to promote specific organizational categorizations that provide self-enhancement to those affiliated (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000). Finally, these theorists have shown that, if individuals' self-conceptions are threatened by unfavorable categorizations of a group or organization to which they belong, they often choose to re-categorize that group in a more positive way to protect and enhance their self-esteem (Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000; Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

In sum, social identity research suggests that individuals associated with an organization are highly motivated to attend to positive identity categorizations of that organization. This selective focus on positive organizational identity categorizations is thought to be especially strong among constituents who strongly identify with the organization and thus perceive a great deal of overlap between their social identities and the organization's identity (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Riketta, 2005).

While organizational researchers have largely focused on self-enhancement motives to explain variation in organizational identity perceptions (Corley & Gioia, 2004; Glynn, 2000; Elsbach, 2001; Elsbach and Kramer, 1996), psychological research on selective categorization (Oakes, 1987; Medin et.al., 1997; Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998) points to an alternative and more spontaneous (i.e., unmotivated) mechanism. Contemporary models of selective categorization take the view that, in addition to self-enhancement motives, the relative *accessibility* (i.e., ease of retrievability from

memory) of a given category may determine if it becomes salient in the minds of perceivers who are encountering a stimulus (McGarty, 1999; Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998; Oakes, 1987). In other words, categorizations that are easily accessible to perceivers are more likely to be chosen to define a person or object than those that are difficult to access (Bargh, Lombardi, and Higgins, 1988; Bargh & Pratto, 1986).

Over time, a person's everyday experience is likely to influence which categorizations are more readily accessible than others (Medin, et.al., 1997; Bodenhausen & Macrae, 1998; Stangor, 1988). As Fiske and Taylor (1991: 264) observe: "[p]ersistent differences in what is primed by one's typical situation may lead to individual differences in what is chronically primed for different people." Categorizations that are frequently encountered and primed become "chronically accessible" to perceivers and, thus, likely to influence their definitions of an object or person.

A study by Medin et.al., (1997) illustrates how chronically accessible categorizations may influence identification of objects. In their study, Medin et.al. (1997) examined how three different sets of tree experts (i.e., researchers, landscapers, and maintenance workers) each categorized a set of 48 common trees. Their findings showed that researchers or "taxonomists" were most likely to categorize these trees according to scientific genus (e.g., *Acer genus* or "maples"), an outcome explained by the researchers' use of these genus names in their everyday work and by "their formal training in scientific taxonomy" (Medin et al., 1997: 90), which gave them extensive experience with these categorizations. In contrast, landscapers and maintenance workers had less experience with tree genus as a categorization type, and thus were found to use genus less often to categorize trees. Instead, maintenance workers were most likely to categorize trees according to morphological or "structural" features (e.g., trees with nuts, or fruit-bearing trees), while landscapers were most likely to categorize trees according to utilitarian concerns (e.g., specimen trees, or trees to plant along city

streets). These results also followed from the maintenance workers' and landscapers' everyday experience with trees (i.e., cleaning up after trees or designing landscaping with trees), which lead specific categorizations to be chronically accessible to them.

It seems possible that a similar perceptual process may occur when observers encounter and define their organizations--especially in terms of its identity, which is likely to be salient in everyday encounters. That is, a constituent group's everyday experience with specific dimensions of an organization's identity may cause specific categorizations related to these identity dimensions to become chronically accessible to that constituent group and, as a result, lead members of that group to use those dimensions when defining the organization's identity. This process may help explain why members of constituent groups choose particular organizational identity categorizations from among the many positive categorizations potentially available to them, or why they occasionally choose non-enhancing categorizations to define their organization's identity (if these categorizations are frequently encountered). Yet, as noted earlier, such a spontaneous cognition perspective has not been examined by organizational identity researchers; thus, our suggestions here remain purely speculative. To address this, we offer the following research question:

Research Question: *How do (1) the chronic accessibility of identity categorizations (arising from everyday experience) and (2) self-enhancement motives (arising from organizational identification) affect the salient, organizational identity categorizations held by different constituent groups?*

We explore answers to this research question through an inductive, survey-based study of organizational identity perceptions by constituents of a large, U.S.-based business school (hereafter referred to as "Western"). We describe our methods and findings next.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

For our empirical study, we collected data through two surveys of Western's constituents. In the first survey, we elicited open-ended responses from constituents about what they regarded to be Western's identity using terminology they found natural and meaningful. We used qualitative research methods to examine the kinds of organizational identity categorizations members of the different constituent groups commonly held. Through this analysis, we determined whether and how such categorizations differed across groups.

We subsequently identified the need to conduct a second survey to help us determine the degree to which differences in groups' categorizations mapped onto the different kinds of experiences group members had with Western. In this second survey, we asked respondents to report the extent to which different categorizations were part of their everyday experience with Western. We used quantitative methods to determine the degree of correspondence between the most commonly held organizational identity categorizations and the everyday experiences of the different constituent groups in our sample.

In our empirical study, we focused on the "within-form" categorizations that establish what is most distinctive about an organization (King and Whetten, 1998) to develop our understanding of the drivers of variation in organizational identity perceptions. For the sake of simplicity, in the remainder of the paper, we will use the term "organizational identity categorizations" to refer to these within-form organizational identity categorizations.

Constituent Groups and Sample

In our first and second surveys, we asked respondents to indicate whether their primary affiliation with Western was as a member of one of three constituent groups: faculty, staff, or MBA student. The first survey was sent to all members within each of these constituent groups who were currently affiliated with Western. The second survey, which we used to gather additional data on the

everyday experiences of the constituent groups in our study, was sent out to a randomly selected set of each group's current members. Since there was a substantial time lag (approximately 2.5 years) between the first and second surveys, it is unlikely that responses on the second survey were biased by respondents' entries on the first survey.

For both surveys, we sent requests to participate in the study's online survey via email to potential survey respondents. The email stated that the survey was part of a research study whose purpose was to build understanding about how important constituents viewed Western. Two weeks after the initial email for each survey, we sent a reminder email. The average response rate was 54.2% for the first survey and 66.4% for the second survey (see Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 About Here]

Measures

Organizational identity categorizations. To gather data regarding the organizational identity categorizations for constituent group members, we employed Brickson's (2005) organizational-level adaptation of Kuhn and McPortland's (1954) Twenty Statements Test. Kuhn and McPortland's test asks respondents to answer the question "Who am I?" twenty times as a way of eliciting beliefs about self-identity. This spontaneous, open-ended approach elicits information about the social categorizations an individual places himself inside that are most salient or chronically accessible to him. Identity theory research suggests that such salience is an indicator of the importance or centrality of a categorization to an individual's self-concept (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2001; Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004).

Brickson (2005) adapted Kuhn and McPartland's test by asking respondents to complete the statement "My organization is ____" ten times as a way of eliciting their beliefs about an organization's identity. Applied at the organizational level, the TST reveals the most salient social

categorizations a respondent holds for the organization—that is, the categorizations central to that individual’s beliefs regarding the organization’s overall identity.¹

In our survey, we asked respondents to complete the sentence “Western is ____” ten times, however they wished, with short (one- to two-word) responses. The survey advised respondents to think of the organization as a whole and to answer in terms of how Western “is” rather than how they would ideally want it to be. If respondents indicated that they were unable to think of ten different ways to complete this statement, they were allowed to move on to the next task after completing as many of the statements as they could. On the next page, we asked respondents to explain in greater detail what they meant by each of their short responses.

As we describe in greater detail in **Appendix A**, we used an iterative qualitative process to group individual identity statements into broader categorizations for the first part of our analysis. We first read through the entire set of statements several times to establish familiarity with the nature of the statements. Then, through multiple passes through the data, we developed and refined categorization codes, grouping together responses that were similar in meaning. Finally, we identified the set of categorizations that related to Western’s organizational identity using King and Whetten’s (2008) definition as a guide.

Average valence of organizational identity categorizations. We constructed a measure of the average valence of respondents’ organizational identity categorizations to explore how self-enhancement motives influenced categorizations. To do this, we first assessed the valence of each identity categorizations in our sample. We (the two authors) each independently coded whether an identity categorization was positive (+1), negative (-1), or neutral in valence (0). Examples of

¹ In her study, Brickson (2005) uses several different measures to elicit beliefs about organizational identity, including the TST, and finds considerable across-measure consistency for her measure of interest—identity orientation. More generally, this comparison suggests that the TST is one of several qualitative measures that may be used to assess beliefs about organizational identity.

positive categorizations are “professional”, “high quality”, and “respected”. Examples of negative categorizations are “unprofessional”, “low quality”, and “not respected”. Neutral categorizations include “small”, “specialist in organizational scope”, and “average quality”. There was only one code that we did not assign the same valence to, which we subsequently discussed and reached agreement on. We then calculated the average valence among the set of categorizations held by each respondent.

Organizational identification. We measured each respondent’s level of organizational identification with Western in our first survey, using this as an indicator of the respondents’ self-enhancement motives. We used the six-item organizational identification scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992) to assess organizational identification. Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each of a set of six statements designed to tap degree of identification with the organization (such as “When someone criticizes Western, it feels like a personal insult” and “I am very interested in what others think about Western”). Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was at a satisfactory level (0.89).

Respondents’ everyday experiences and chronic accessibility to categorizations. Through our second survey, we collected data on the degree to which respondents believed each of the categorizations elicited in the first survey was a salient aspect of their everyday experiences with Western. We first asked respondents to reflect on their everyday experiences as a member of Western, including work conducted in affiliation with Western, interactions with members of Western, and any decision-making relating to Western in any way. We then asked respondents to indicate on a 5 point scale, ranging from “Not at all” to “A very high degree,” the degree to which each of the categorizations was a salient aspect of those experiences (e.g., “My everyday experiences with Western include reflections on the supportiveness of its members and/or culture”). We used

this data as a measure of the chronic accessibility of each of the identity categorizations to members of each constituent group.

Analysis

We used several methods to investigate how chronic accessibility and self-enhancement motives affected the salient, organizational identity categorizations held by Western's constituents. Figure 1 provides an overview of our data analysis process.

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

Building a map of identity categorizations. We first constructed a series of figures comparing the most frequently referenced categorizations by constituent group and by level of organizational identification (comparing “high” and “low” identifiers). The average and median number of categorizations referenced per respondent is 6.8 and 7, respectively. We used these numbers as a guide for our comparisons and focused on the top seven most commonly held categorizations across each group. These figures provide a qualitative overview of whether and how categorizations differed across constituent and identification groups.

Quantitative tests of the role of chronic accessibility of categorizations. To answer the first part of our research question, we explored the role the chronic accessibility of categorizations played in shaping the salience of organizational identity categorizations by assessing the correspondence between organizational identity categorizations (from the first survey) and the everyday experiences of constituent groups (from the second survey). To do this, we used a series of t-tests to assess whether differences in the most commonly held identity categorizations across the different constituent groups corresponded to differences in the degree to which group members regarded these

categorizations as part of their everyday experiences. Tables 2 and 3 report the most salient categorizations for each group (the first two columns in each table) and what patterns in assessments of everyday experiences would be consistent with an explanation based on chronic accessibility (the third column). In the last column, we report whether this pattern was found and was statistically significant ($p < 0.10$).

The following example illustrates how we conducted this analysis. Our data showed that the categorization of “respected” was one of the most salient identity categorizations held by staff, but not faculty. If this difference was influenced by differences in the chronic accessibility of this categorization, then, compared to faculty, staff should have reported that considerations of how much Western was “respected” played a greater role in their everyday experiences. Accordingly, we performed a t-test to compare faculty vs. staff members’ average assessment of the degree to which Western being “respected” was a part of their everyday experiences (on the 5-point Likert scale).

Some categorizations were commonly shared across constituent groups. For example, “collaborative” was among the most common identity categorizations held by faculty as well as by staff. In such cases, having no significant difference in everyday experience assessments for “collaborative” between faculty and staff would be consistent with an explanation based on chronic accessibility.

This main analysis of the role of everyday experience and chronic accessibility focused on the most commonly held identity categorizations across constituent groups. In a supplementary analysis, we examined the robustness of our findings by testing the relationship between everyday experience and members’ organizational identity categorizations for all identity categorizations (not just the most commonly held). These findings, presented in Appendix B, provide evidence consistent with our main analysis.

Quantitative tests of the role of self-enhancement motives. To answer the second part of our research question, we explored how respondents' levels of organizational identification (as a measure of self-enhancement motives) shaped their salient organizational identity categorizations. The motivated cognition perspective suggests that individuals' needs for self-enhancement causes them to focus more on positive (vs. negative) features of the organization when they more strongly identify as members of the organization. To test this, we estimated the effects of each respondent's organizational identification on the average valence (measurement discussed above) across all of his or her identity categorizations using OLS regression (with robust standard errors using Huber/White/“sandwich” estimates).

FINDINGS

Our analysis produced several interesting insights about how self-enhancement motives and the chronic accessibility of categorizations affect different audiences' perceptions of the most salient identity categorizations for an organization. Below, we organize our discussion around these main findings. We summarize supporting data and illustrations in Tables 2-5, and in Figures 2 and 3.

[Insert Tables 2-5, and Figures 2 and 3 About Here]

Finding 1: Both Self-Enhancement Motives and the Chronic Accessibility of Categorizations Influence Differences in Organizational Identity Categorizations

To discuss this first insight, we organize our specific findings below in terms of the influence of: (1) the chronic accessibility of categorizations, (2) self-enhancement motives, and (3) the dual influence of chronic accessibility and self-enhancement motives. Within each of these sections, we compare two sets of constituent groups (i.e., students vs. employees, and faculty employees vs. staff employees).

Evidence of the influence of the chronic accessibility of categorizations. In Figure 2.A, we compare the most common identity categorizations of two key constituent groups -- employees of Western (i.e., both staff and faculty) and students of Western. These groups might be expected to differ in their everyday experiences and, thus, their chronically accessible organizational identity categorizations. More specifically, one might expect the chronically accessible (and thus, salient) identity categorizations held by students to center more on learning and career issues, while those held by employees (whose primary functions related to the design, delivery, and administration of Western's various programs) to center more on operational and reputational issues.

In line with these expectations, Figure 2.A shows differences in the most salient organizational identity categorizations held by Western's employees and students. Western's students (but not its employees) found the categorizations of "career focused", "demanding", and "learning focused" to be highly salient — categorizations which centered on the content and demands of the classes in which the students participated. As Table 2 shows, students reported two of these three categorizations (i.e., "career focused" and "demanding" but not "learning focused") to be a significantly greater part of their everyday experience relative to faculty. In contrast, Western's employees focused on the identity categorizations of "resource poor", "innovative", and "respected" — categorizations which centered on the development, delivery, and external reputation of its program offerings. Table 2 also shows that, of these three categorizations, just "resource poor" was reported by employees to play a significantly greater role in their everyday experience than students. Overall, seven of the ten t-tests comparing students versus employees show results consistent with an explanation based on chronic accessibility (i.e., differences in salient identity categorizations appear to be influenced by differences in the chronic accessibility of the categorizations to the different constituent groups).

Figure 3.A also provides a more fine-grained comparison of the most salient categorizations held by the two groups of Western employees--faculty and staff. As this figure indicates, three identity categorizations -- “hard working”, “innovative”, and “respected” -- were highly salient to staff but not faculty. In contrast, faculty, but not staff, held the categorizations of “resource poor”, “research focused”, and “high quality” as highly salient. These findings suggest that, because of the chronic accessibility of these categorizations, faculty may have been more focused on the internal quality of Western’s activities (and, in particular, research-related activities) in their identity categorizations, while staff were more focused on the level of respect their activities generate among external constituents as well as how innovative these activities seemed (two issues common in staff members’ everyday experience) in their identity categorizations. Table 3 confirms these notions by showing that eight of the ten t-tests comparing faculty versus staff support a chronic accessibility explanation for differences in salient identity categorizations.

Together, the findings summarized in Figures 2.A and 3.A suggest that the chronic accessibility of categorizations plays some role in determining which organizational identity categorizations employees versus students find most salient. Yet, given that not all t-tests confirmed a chronic accessibility explanation for our findings, it is not likely the sole determinant.

Evidence of the influence of self-enhancement motives. We next examine the role of self-enhancement motives (based on level of organizational identification) in shaping which categorizations were most salient to respondents. In Figure 2.B, we divide all respondents into “high” versus “low” identifiers based on the average identification score in our sample. Telling differences emerge in terms of which categorizations were not shared across low versus high identification groups: high identifiers commonly held the categorizations of “innovative”, “learning focused”, and “high quality”, while low identifiers held the categorizations of “costly”, “hard

working”, and “not effective”. All three categorizations held only by high identifiers have positive connotations, while two of the three categorizations held only by low identifiers are negative in connotation (“costly” and “not effective”). These findings suggest that those who identify with Western more strongly tend to view the organization’s identity in more positive terms, and thus, support a self-enhancement motive for identity categorization.

Our quantitative analyses support these observational findings. Our results in Table 4 show the level of organizational identification to have a significant positive influence on average valence of categorization (i.e., higher identifiers define Western via more positive (vs. negative) categorizations). This finding is robust across several model specifications: Model 1 includes just our main variable of organizational identification, Model 2 includes several demographic controls (years of affiliation with Western, gender (female=1), and age of respondent, and Model 3 includes controls for the different constituent groups.

We next examine whether the influence of self-enhancement motives on identity categorizations remains when we compare among just the different types of employees. In Figure 3.B, we compare the organizational identity categorizations held by staff versus faculty with differing identification levels. This figure shows that, among high identifying employees, only one of the top seven salient identity categorizations is negatively valenced (“resource poor”), while three of the top seven categorizations held by low identifying employees are negatively valenced. In our quantitative analyses (Models 1 and 2 in Table 5), we again found a significant and positive effect of organizational identification level on average valence, supporting the notion that faculty and staff who were more motivated to view Western positively (because they were high identifiers) tended to hold more positive organizational identity categorizations.

Together, the findings summarized in Figures 2.B and 3.B suggest that, like chronic accessibility of categorizations, self-enhancement motives play some role in determining which organizational identity categorizations employees versus students find most salient. It appears, then, that to understand the whole story of why constituent groups differ in their salient organizational identity categorizations, we need to consider both self-enhancement motives and chronic-accessibility. We look at what happens when we consider these two predictors simultaneously next.

Evidence of the dual effect of chronic accessibility and self-enhancement motives. If both chronic accessibility and self-enhancement motives are important in determining the types of identity categorizations constituent group members hold, we might expect to see evidence of both of these predictors if we compare constituents based on both everyday experience and level of organizational identification. For example, we would expect that high identifying *students* would to have different identity categorizations than high identifying *employees*. Similarly, we would expect low identifying *faculty employees* to have different identity categorizations than low identifying *staff employees*.

The findings summarized in Figure 2.C provides support for a dual effect of chronic accessibility and self-enhancement motives on identity perceptions across all constituents. As shown in this figure, both low and high identifiers focused on negatively- or positively-valenced categorizations, respectively (in line with a self-enhancement explanation), but the everyday experiences (and thus chronically accessible categorizations) of different constituent groups shaped the type of negative or positive categorizations on which members focused. For example, low identifying employees focused on the lack of effectiveness of the organization's policies and practices (which they likely encountered frequently as they conducted their everyday tasks and responsibilities), while low identifying students focused on the high cost of the MBA program (which they frequently

encountered). Similarly, high identifying employees focused on positive aspects of the design, delivery, and reputation of Western's programs ("innovative", "respected", and "high quality"), while high identifying students focused on positive aspects of the coursework they undertook ("career-focused" and "learning-focused").

Similarly, Figure 3.B shows the most salient categorizations of faculty and staff employees based on both self-enhancement motives and chronically accessible categorizations. As in Figure 2.C, this figure shows that, while both groups of high identifying employees held mostly positive identity categorizations for Western, high identifying staff held different positive categorizations than did high identifying faculty. Staff generally focused on the reputation and cultural dimensions of Western, but not research, while faculty focused on culture and research, but not its reputation. These differences support our earlier observation that faculty appeared more focused on the internal quality of Western's activities, while staff appeared more focused on the level of respect those activities garner. Figure 3.B also shows that low identifiers (compared to high identifiers) generally held more negative categorizations for Western. However, low identifying staff focused on "poor facilities," while low identifying faculty focused on the school being "not effective".

Overall, these findings suggest that both self-enhancement motives (based on level of identification) and the chronic accessibility of categorizations (based on constituents' everyday experiences) shaped which identity categorizations were most salient to constituent groups at Western. An illustration of our proposed "dual path" model based on these findings is shown in Figure 4.

[Insert Figure 4 about here]

Finding 2: Core Organizational Identity Categorizations are Shared Across Groups

Despite the differences in organizational identity categorizations discussed above, there appear to be a set of core identity categorizations that were generally shared across constituent groups at Western. As Figures 2.A and 2.B show, the same four identity categorizations that were shared when we divided respondents based on everyday experience (i.e., employees versus students) were shared by high and low identifiers: “collaborative”, “small”, “supportive”, and “friendly.” We also see that the same four culture/atmosphere categorizations were shared when we compared across employee types (faculty vs. staff).

Pinpointing whether the shared salience of these four categorizations was driven solely by self-enhancement motives versus the chronic accessibility of categorizations is not possible. On the one hand, everyday experience does appear to help explain whether and which identity categorizations were shared. The t-tests in Table 2 show that employees and students reported these four categorizations to be a part of their everyday experiences to similar degrees. Similarly, the t-tests in Table 3 show that faculty and staff both reported these four categorizations to be a part of their everyday experiences to similar degrees. These findings suggest that these four positive aspects of Western’s internal environment (i.e., “collaborative”, “small”, “supportive”, and “friendly”) were commonly encountered aspects of Western’s identity across all constituent groups.

At the same time, three of the four categorizations (“collaborative”, “supportive”, and “friendly”) are positive in valence, while “small” is neutral. This suggests that we cannot rule out the influence of self-enhancement motives on the development of “core” identity categorizations (otherwise we might expect to see some negative categorizations in this core set). To be sure, our results suggest everyday experience may cause negative categorizations to become salient, even among high identifiers (as we explain in more detail next). However, the simultaneous influence of self-

enhancement motives may mean that, more often than not, those categorizations that come to be shared across diverse constituent groups will tend to be positive in valence.

Finding 3: Organizational Identity Categorizations May Be Negative, Even Among High Identifiers, If Everyday Experiences Make Those Categorizations Salient

A final, provocative finding to emerge from our analysis is that, even among high identifying constituents, some of the most salient identity categorizations were negative in valence. Figure 2.C shows that “resource poor”, a negatively-valenced categorization, was salient to both high and low identifying employees. In particular, in Figure 3.C, we see that “resource poor” was salient to high and low identifying faculty employees. Interestingly, both faculty and staff report “resource poor” to be a salient part of their everyday experiences to equal degrees. Low organizational identification appears to further encourage members of both groups to focus on this negative categorization. Yet only high identifying faculty (and not high identifying staff) employees report this to be a highly salient identity categorization.

Although we cannot be certain why this was the case, we speculate that most faculty, including high identifying faculty, were frequently reminded of the poor resources at Western through their daily teaching and research as well as through comparisons to other schools through their frequent travel and meetings at other schools. As a result, this negative categorization became chronically accessible to faculty, including high-identifying faculty, and thus became a salient categorization in their perceptions of Western’s identity. By contrast, although staff were also reminded of poor resources in their daily work interactions, they were not able to *compare* these poor resources to those of other schools (due to their infrequent travel to other schools). Thus, these experiences were not made as salient to them (through comparison) as they were to faculty.

It is also important to note that “costly”, another negatively-valenced identity categorization, was not rated high in terms of everyday experience by high identifiers (see Figure 2). This may explain why it was not included in these respondents’ most salient identity categorizations.²

Together, these findings suggest that, if negative categorizations are highly salient in constituents’ everyday experience (e.g., resource poor), they may influence perceptions of organizational identity, even among those who are highly motivated to perceive the organization’s identity in positive terms.³ This finding is important to making the case that both motivated and spontaneous categorization processes influenced constituent groups at Western. If motivated cognition were the only driver of identity categorizations, we would not have seen the choice of negative identity categorizations as defining Western’s identity. Apparently, high identifiers did not always view Western through “rose-colored glasses,” especially when less than rosy dimensions were highly salient.

DISCUSSION

Our findings suggest three insights about how variation arises in constituent groups’ perceptions of the most salient, identity categorizations that define an organization. First, our findings suggest that both the chronic accessibility of categorizations and self-enhancement motives influence the specific organizational identity categorizations that become salient to different constituent groups. Second, our data indicate that, despite differences across constituent groups in identity categorizations, there exist a core set of identity categorizations that are shared. Finally, our data suggest that, because of the influence of everyday experience, negative organizational identity categorizations may be salient even to individuals with high levels of organizational identification.

² Note that we identified the categorization “demanding” as neutral in valence based on the way it was used by participants in our study (i.e., to define the curriculum as both difficult but also rigorous).

Together, these findings have a number of implications for theories of organizational identity, methods of identity research, and the practice of identity management.

Theoretical Implications

Perceptions of organizational identities. A first theoretical implication of our findings relates to the processes by which constituents come to perceive an organization's identity. Overall, our findings suggest a *dual-path* framework of identity perception (see Figure 4). Psychologists have increasingly adopted dual-process frameworks which explain interpersonal perception based on both motivated and spontaneous cognitions (see Chaiken & Trope, 1999). Yet, these frameworks are relatively rare in theories of organizational perception. Our findings provide evidence of dual cognitive processes (associated with self-enhancement motives and the chronic accessibility of categorizations) in definitions of organizational identity.

According to our model, a person's type of affiliation with an organization (e.g., student vs. employee) is likely to lead to distinct everyday experiences (e.g., classroom vs. external marketing experiences) which, in turn, influence the salience of identity categorizations based on those experiences (e.g., "learning focused" vs. "well-respected"). At the same time, a person's degree of identification with an organization is likely to lead to differences in the importance of positively-valenced identity categorizations (i.e., because high-identifiers are likely to rely more on the organization for self-enhancement) and, in turn, lead to differences in the salience of positive vs. negative identity categorizations.

In this figure, we depict both self-enhancement motives and everyday experiences as simultaneously influencing which organizational identity categorizations become most salient across constituent groups. Self-enhancement motives may cause a constituent to focus more on positive categorizations of the organization, but the specific categorizations that become salient and

chronically accessible depend on his or her role-driven everyday experiences. Conversely, a constituent's everyday experiences with an organization may increase attention to a particular categorization, but his or her motivation to view the organization in positive terms further influences whether the categorization becomes highly salient and chronically accessible. Our findings suggest that, together, these mechanisms simultaneously shape similarities and differences in the salience of organizational identity categorizations across constituent groups.

Our framework further suggests a possible reinterpretation of prior studies that have employed a motivated cognition lens to explain variation in organizational identity categorizations. For example, in a study of a UK-based institution of higher education, Humphreys and Brown (2002) found key differences between faculty groups in perceptions of organizational identity that they attributed to self-enhancement motives. In particular, they found that faculty groups who were most successful at publishing research emphasized the organizational identity categorization of "national research university," while faculty who were most successful at teaching emphasized the identity categorization of "local teaching institute." The explanation provided was that each faculty group focused on the specific, identity categorizations that most enhanced their group's status.

However, consistent with an explanation based on the chronic accessibility of categorizations, research-focused faculty also tend to spend more time and effort on research activities relative to teaching-focused faculty, which might influence their specific focus on the categorization of "research university" (the converse is true for teaching-focused faculty). Indeed, it is likely that for many organizational categorizations, status and everyday experience coincide in this manner. Our study has taken a first step towards recognizing that both mechanisms may simultaneously influence the salience of specific categorizations.

Conceptions of organizational identity. A second and broader theoretical implication of our study relates to basic conceptualizations of organizational identities. Existing studies documenting complexity or variation in organizational identity beliefs across constituent groups have largely focused on what Albert and Whetten (1985) termed “ideographic” hybrid organizations, which revolve around conflict in different group’s definitions of an organization’s form identity (e.g., Golden-Biddle and Rao, 1997; Pratt and Rafaeli, 1997; Glynn, 2000; Foreman and Whetten, 2002). Following such work, organizational theorists have often characterized organizational identities as either pure holographic, with complete congruity across constituent groups in organizational identity categorizations, or pure ideographic types, with conflict in definitions of the organization’s identity across groups.

Our findings, however, suggest a different approach to conceptualizing the degree of congruity among constituents’ definitions of their organization’s identity. While all groups may share a core set of categorizations that define the organization’s identity, members of different constituent groups may perceive different sets of organizational identity categorizations as most salient and important. That is, across constituent groups, organizations might have some identity dimensions where there is complete congruity across constituent groups, but others that are specific to specific groups. Such identities could not be defined as either a pure holographic or pure ideographic type.

It might be tempting to focus only on the categorizations that are shared across all constituent groups and regard those categorizations as the organization’s identity. But such a focus would ignore the fact that, at least in our data, some of the categorizations that were not shared *across* constituent groups were strongly shared *within* constituent groups. For example, the identity categorization “demanding” was not salient to employees, but was one of the most salient identity

categorizations for students. Similarly, the identity categorization of “research focused” was highly significant to faculty employees, but not to staff employees.

We propose, instead, that theorists think of organizational identity more as a collection of categorizations, in which some categorizations are consistently salient across groups, while others vary in their salience to different groups depending on both self-enhancement motives and the chronic accessibility of those categorizations for those groups’ members. The set of consistently salient categorizations we uncovered supports Albert and Whetten’s (1985) notion that organizational identity consists of a set of shared, central, and enduring set of categorizations. At the same time, our conceptualization of organizational identity as collection of categorizations – some shared, some not shared – provides a framework for explaining the variations in identity perceptions often seen across constituent groups.

We find it interesting that the four, shared categorizations in this case all relate to the culture or general atmosphere within Western. This suggests that Western had a strong culture that different constituents commonly experienced, leading to shared identity categorizations based around that culture. We do not believe this suggests that, if one were to look at all organizations, the identity categorizations that are shared across constituent groups will relate to culture/atmosphere. However, we do expect that these categorizations will generally correspond to aspects of the organization that clearly distinguish it relative to similar others. For example, we would expect that constituents of an organization that is high in the status hierarchy of its field would share a common categorization of “elite” or “top tier”. Similarly, we would expect that constituents of an organization that was a first entrant into its field to share a common categorization based on its early mover position.

These findings support the notion that the basic function of identity is to establish what is fundamentally distinctive about an organization, which helps satisfy individuals needs for

uniqueness and self-verification (King and Whetten, 2008). In doing so, they add to recent research that has shown an overlap between the conceptions of organizational culture and “within-form” identity (the identity categorizations that establish what is distinctive about an organization relative to similar others). For example, in his study of multiple identity perceptions in a spin-off of a U.S. Technology company, Corley (2004) showed how employees focused on cultural dimensions of the organization’s identity to affirm established and distinctive values and beliefs that were central to their perceptions of organizational identity. Our findings extend this thinking by suggesting that such cultural categorizations are salient in the minds of organizational members not just because they are distinctive and affirming, but also because they are chronically salient in their everyday lives. This is consistent with the notion that cultural practices and artifacts provide organizational members with visible, tangible cues that shape their organizational identity perceptions (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). Such cues are likely to provide a stable grounding force shaping organizational members’ everyday activities and thus their organizational identity categorizations. They may also lead to variation in organizational identity categorizations among different groups, as different tangible practices lead to both the emergence of distinct subcultures (e.g., Hofstede, 1998) and differences in salient categorizations.

Methodological Implications

Our findings also show how Brickson’s (2005) adaptation of the Ten Statements Test can be used to advance understanding of divergence in the most salient organizational identity categorizations perceived by constituents. Developing methods for systematically comparing the identity perceptions held by different constituents has posed a challenge to organizational identity researchers. Empirical studies of organizational identity have often focused on conceptions of an organization that are equivalently shared across constituent groups. One likely explanation for this

focus is that convergence in organizational identity facilitates the measurement of the identity construct (i.e., it is easier to measure identity if all dimensions are equally salient across constituent groups). As a result, researchers have often presumed convergence in the salience of identity dimensions, while openly admitting that it may not be a perfect way to measure organizational identity. For example, in discussing the methods by which they identified organizational identity in health care systems, Dukerich et. al. (2002: 515), note the following:

[W]e generated a list of system identity attributes for each system. We then selected 37 attributes that were mentioned by physicians in all three of the systems. Although a number of the attributes might not be considered typical "identity" elements, these came out of the focus groups when physicians were asked to generate adjectives, values, and distinctive aspects of the systems. *Since there is no established measure of organizational identity that can be used in survey research, we based our measure on the attributes that were consistently mentioned across all of the focus groups.* [emphasis added]

Our study suggests that using the Ten Statements Test may be a viable way to uncover convergence and divergence in identity perceptions across constituent groups, providing a more nuanced definition and measurement of organizational identity.

We also believe that the Ten Statements Test may be a useful instrument for organizational researchers to collect information on organizational identity categorizations that are negative in valence. Respondents are more likely to admit they hold negative organizational identity categorizations when this information is collected anonymously. To date, most research on organizational identity has typically relied on interviews or analysis of public company documents to assess perceptions of organizational identity. Not surprisingly, these largely reveal positive identity categorizations. However, our research suggests that, in some organizations, even constituents who strongly identify with the organization can hold negatively valenced categorizations as a result of their everyday experiences. Anonymous survey-based instruments may thus represent a useful

method for gathering the full range of organizational identity categorizations held by organizational constituents.

Practical Implications

Finally, our findings have a number of practical implications for organizations and managers. First, our findings provide help to those charged with managing an organization's identity, especially when that identity is multi-faceted. As Pratt and Foreman (2000) argue, an important function of organizational leaders is managing multiple organizational identities. Multiple identities can allow organizations greater flexibility in complex and changing environments (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Pratt & Foreman, 2000), but can also give rise to significant intraorganizational conflict and inefficiencies (Golden-Biddle & Rao, 1997; Glynn, 2000). A key first step for effectively handling multiple identities is getting a sense of the “landscape” of the different identities espoused by key constituents as well as the degree to which these identity perceptions overlap with one another. The method developed here of surveying diverse constituents and systematically comparing their categorizations with one another presents one effective way of constructing this type of mental map. This map would inform managers as to where synergies exist between the identities held by different constituent groups, where conflict may arise, how different constituents are likely to regard proposed changes in the organization's strategy or core capabilities, and which groups are likely to be most receptive or resistant to such changes. It would also provide managers with valuable information regarding where their own conceptions diverge from those held by others in the organization.

Even more than providing a method for assessing the identity landscape, our study also provides a framework for managers to anticipate differences in how constituents will construe organizational identity. This would enable managers to better understand issues such as which categorizations are likely to be more important or salient to particular constituents. This may be useful for managers

who want to proactively shape constituent impressions, particularly during times of change. It is also likely to be useful in the design of various human resource practices, such as recruitment, selection, socialization, and training. Active management of multiple identities may be particularly challenging and rewarding in diversified firms. In such organizations, there is likely to be a high natural degree of identity plurality. Top managers would benefit from understanding where differences in conceptions exist and where synergies can be cultivated to encourage commitment to the organization as a whole.

Active management of multiple identities may be a particular concern in organizations with a high degree of diversity among workers. Our results suggest that diverse experiences will influence people to hold different definitions of an organization's identity. These differing definitions may prove an additional barrier to effective coordination of diverse teams of employees. Efforts to identify both shared and divergent categorizations would likely help managers trying to encouraging identification with and collaboration among team members.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Research on variation in organizational identities is still in its infancy and our study is limited in its explication of this construct. First, we have chosen to focus on variation in organizational identity categorizations to help broaden understanding of the drivers of variation in organizational identity perceptions. We believe that our findings regarding the chronic accessibility of categorizations may also explain some variation in form-level identity categorizations (which has been primarily explained vis-à-vis social identification and motivated cognition). Yet, future research is needed to confirm whether this is indeed the case.

Along the same lines, our interpretation of data relies on extant findings from related psychological research that indicate how salience in everyday experience can be used as a proxy for

chronic accessibility of categories (Medin et al., 1997; Macrae & Bodenhausen 2001), and how social identification may be used as an indicator of motivated cognition (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Hogg & Terry, 2000). We used these measures because we could not access the cognitive processes of our participants directly through our field study. We have also relied on correlational relationships uncovered through our surveys to examine the connection between chronic accessibility, social identification, and organizational identity categorizations. Future research using controlled experimental designs is necessary to provide additional support for our findings.

Third, there may be factors besides everyday experience that influence the spontaneous cognitions that drive identity categorizations. For example, social networks are likely to shape the organizational identity categorizations salient to constituents. An organization whose constituents reside in isolated cliques may be likely to house completely distinct conceptions of identity. The identity landscape there is likely to be quite different from an organization with a highly centralized network, from one that is richly interconnected, or from one that consists of long, thin chains of connections. The degree to which different categorizations are formed as well as the amount of friction that arises from conflicting beliefs, are likely to be influenced by the organization's network structure. More generally, research is needed to understanding how other organizational factors, such as degree of differentiation and hierarchy, size, and age, influence the degree of divergence seen in constituent definitions of organizational identity.

Similarly, our current study focused on the distinction between employees and students in a business school because this is a broadly relevant choice of groupings in this setting. In other contexts, there will also likely be other possible means of distinguishing between constituent groups and many other types of organizations to study. For example, in a corporate environment, there may be distinctions in staff vs. managerial employees, or in technical vs. clerical workers. The basic

principles we have developed for predicting differences in organizational identity perceptions could and should be extended to analyze other points of divergence.

We also believe our incorporation of students as a constituency of the organization studied points to the importance of studying “liminal” members of organizations--those that are neither internal nor external to the organization, but sit at its boundary. Zabusky and Barley (1997: 370) observe that the “terms liminality and liminal are often used to emphasize the complexities that affect those whose role in society cannot be easily defined”. For example, Zabusky and Barley define research scientists and engineers working on projects for the European Space Agency (ESA) as liminal. These project scientists, who held official appointments at research universities, qualified as liminal professionals because they were both excluded from the ESA (because they were not full-time employees of the organization), and excluded from their academic community (because they were not full-time university researchers).

Current studies of organizational identity perceptions largely focus on individuals who rest clearly within organizational boundaries. However, in many organizations (such as the one studied), liminal members represent important and understudied constituencies that organizations rely on for resources, support, and participation. As our study shows, their very different experiences and roles within the organization likely lead to important differences in how they view the organization’s identity.

Finally, our study took a snapshot of organizational identity perceptions at one point in time. We did not examine how perceptions of organizational identity across constituent groups might evolve over time. We might ask what types of categorizations tend to be enduring for different constituents, for example? And are there typical stages through which constituents evolve in terms of the categorizations they hold? For example, do categorizations become both more specific and

multifaceted as a constituent's experience with the organization lengthens? And does this occur both among internal and external constituents? Periods of crisis are particularly important to the study of change in identity categorizations (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996). Our method provides a way of extending such research to measure how much categorizations change in response to negative events, what categorization are most flexible or adaptive, and how identity threats shape the long-term trajectory of identity evolution.

Conclusion

Our findings provide a new perspective on how and why organizational identity perceptions may vary across organizational constituents. As a result, our findings suggest a more complex conception of organizational identity perception and contribute to a growing body of empirical research that shows that organizational identity is constructed from both the sense making efforts of organizational members (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Fiol, 1991; 2002; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000), and the sense giving claims of organizational leaders (Czarniawska, 1997; Whetten & Mackey, 2002; Corley & Gioia, 2004).

We believe our dual process view of organizational identity helps to further explicate the “sensegiving” and “sensemaking” perspectives of organizational identity by suggesting a set of underlying cognitive processes used in both identity construction and maintenance. For example, in describing social actor frameworks, Ravasi and Schultz (2006: 435) claim that organizational leaders “attempt to influence how internal and external audiences define and interpret the organization. . . .” Further, they claim that organizational leaders would react to external challenges to existing organizational identities with responses aimed at “preserving personal and external representations of what the organization is or stands for” (Ravasi & Shultz, 2006: 435). These remarks suggest that organizational leaders may be motivated, primarily, by needs for consistency and self-verification

(Swann & Read, 1981) in their identity claims. At the same time, Ravasi and Schultz (2006:435) also suggest that organizational leaders choose the institutional claims they use in their identity claims from a set of “legitimate social categories.” Thus, organizational leaders may also be influenced by more automatic and spontaneous sensemaking in their search viable categories to use in their identity claims.

In sum, these examples suggest that motivated cognition may provide a strong influence on sensegiving processes, while spontaneous cognition may primarily influence sensegiving processes. At any given point in time, one or the other cognitive process may be dominant in its influence. Yet, over time, both process affect the perception of organizational identity.

Such a dual process view of organizational identity helps to integrate sensegiving and sensemaking perspectives by suggesting a single set of underlying cognitive processes used in identity construction and maintenance (i.e., motivated and spontaneous categorization). This type of integrative perspective has been recently forwarded by organizational identity theorists (e.g., Gioia et al., 2010) as a means of ending debates about the dominance of sensemaking vs. sensegiving in organizational identity formation. Our hope is that the current findings help to further an integrated perspective on organizational identity perception in general, and direct researchers to consider a broader set of constituents and cognitive processes in their future research.

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Appendix A: TST categorization coding process.

The goal of our coding effort was to group individual statements into broader codes through a gradual, iterative process. First, we read through the entire set of unique statements several times to establish familiarity with the nature of the statements made. Then, in the first coding pass, words or phrases judged as synonymous in meaning were collapsed together under the same code. For example, we merged the statements “disorganized” and “unorganized” into the same code. We consulted Webster’s Online thesaurus (<http://www.webster.com>) to guide assessments of synonymy. If a short response was ambiguous in nature, we consulted respondents’ more detailed statements from a separate section of the survey to generate an overall assessment of the meaning of the statement. The aim of this first iteration was to collapse together codes that were clearly redundant in meaning.

In the next iteration, we continued to condense the codes into groups based on our own assessments of similarity. For example, “friendly” was grouped with phrases such as “outgoing,” and “sociable.” We took several additional passes to further condense the codes into a limited set. During each iteration, we reviewed original statements and elaborations of statements to ensure coherence within proposed groupings. In total, we developed 104 codes. Respondents sometimes combined multiple identity assessments within a single statement (for example, “fun and talented”). In such cases, we disaggregated the statement into its constituent parts, which were each grouped in the manner described above.

To establish the reliability of our coding, we randomly selected 200 of the original statements and had two independent coders code these statements using the category scheme developed above. The average percent agreement between the main codes and the codes assigned by each independent coder was 92.3.

A final step in our categorization coding involved separating codes that are “within-form” organizational identity categorizations from other types of identity beliefs generated by the TST. Categorizations refer to classes of objects believed to belong together based on perceptions of similarity and dissimilarity or knowledge and theory about the world (Kunda, 1999; McGarty, 1999; Medin, Ross, and Markman, 2005). Examples of social categorizations commonly referenced in social cognition literature are “extroverted person,” “Asian American,” “librarian,” and “birthday party.” Within-form organizational identity categorizations distinguish the organization from others in its same social form or type (King and Whetten, 2008).

We used this definition to identify all codes that referenced a specific kind of organization within the broader form of business school. This included, among other things, cultural traits (“a collaborative organization”), types of organizational structure (“a bureaucracy”), strategic or mission-based groupings (“community oriented,” “research oriented”), and reputation (“respected,” “not prominent”). We excluded codes that either did not reference a category of objects or were not intended as statements about the organization as a whole. This included broad evaluations of the organization (i.e. “doing well,” “performing poorly”), evaluations of or references to specific groups or individuals within the organization (i.e. “good in terms of support staff”), and references to a specific relationship between the individual respondent and BizRes (i.e. “where someone I knew went to school”). In total, 82 of the 104 codes were judged to be lower order organizational categorizations and included in our sample for analysis.

Appendix B: Supplementary analysis of the relationship between everyday experience and organizational identity categorizations.

In this supplementary analysis, we analyzed the correlation between how commonly an identity categorization was held by members of a constituent group and the degree to which it characterized everyday experiences for members of that group. While our main analysis focused on the most common identity categorizations held by each group, this supplementary analysis examines all identity categorizations. To do this, we constructed two sets of rankings. In the first set, we ranked the identity categorizations in terms how commonly they were held by members of each constituent group: the most commonly held categorization by group members was ranked 1st, the next most commonly held categorization was ranked 2nd, and so forth. Identity categorizations that were not held by any group members were assigned the lowest ranking.

We then ranked categorizations in terms of the average degree to which group members reported them as part of their everyday experience in the second survey. The identity categorization that had the highest score (on our 5 point scale) was given a ranking of 1st, the next highest identity categorization was assigned a ranking of 2nd, and so forth. We then calculated the correlation between these two rankings using Spearman's rank correlation test for each of the constituent groups. A positive correlation indicates that everyday experience influences which identity categorizations are most salient to an organizational members.

Table A.1 shows the correlations between identity categorization and everyday experience rankings for different constituent groups. The correlations at the employee and student level are 0.61 and 0.67, respectively. For the more fine-grained groupings, the correlations are high for faculty (0.84), and lower for staff (0.48). These correlations are relatively high overall and consistent with the idea that organizational identity categorizations are partially influenced by everyday experience.

Figure 1
Overview of Data Analysis

Figure 2: Organizational Identity Categorizations for All Organizational Members

Figure 3: Organizational Identity Categorizations for Employees Only

Figure 4: A Dual-Path Model of Organizational Identity Categorization

Table 1: Response Rate by Respondent Type

Role	Number of responses	Number of emails	Response rate
<u>1st survey</u>			
MBA student	88	157	56.0%
Faculty	15	28	53.6%
Administrative staff	17	32	53.1%
<i>average</i>			54.2%
<u>2nd survey</u>			
MBA student	30	46	65.2%
Faculty	17	23	73.9%
Administrative staff	15	25	60.0%
<i>average</i>			66.4%

Table 2. Analysis of Correspondence Between Organizational Identity Categorizations and Everyday Experience for Employees and Students

Categorization	Most salient: Employees [1]	Most salient: Students [2]	Everyday experience expectation	Supported (Y/N)
collaborative	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
small	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
supportive	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
friendly	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
career focused		X	[2]>[1]	Y
demanding		X	[2]>[1]	Y
learning focused		X	[2]>[1]	N
resource poor	X		[1]>[2]	Y
innovative	X		[1]>[2]	N
respected	X		[1]>[2]	N

Table 3. Analysis of Correspondence Between Organizational Identity Categorizations and Everyday Experience for Faculty and Staff

Category	Most salient: Staff [1]	Most salient: Faculty [2]	Everyday experience expectation	Supported (Y/N)
collaborative	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
small	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
supportive	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
friendly	X	X	[1]=[2]	Y
hard working	X		[1]>[2]	Y
innovative	X		[1]>[2]	Y
respected	X		[1]>[2]	Y
resource poor		X	[2]>[1]	N
research focused		X	[2]>[1]	Y
high quality		X	[2]>[1]	N

Table 4. OLS regression of Effect of Organizational Identification on Average Valence of Organizational Identity Categorizations: All Constituents

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Organizational Identification	0.209*** (0.04)	0.207*** (0.05)	0.193*** (0.05)
Number of Categorizations		-0.001 (0.02)	-0.014 (0.02)
Years of Affiliation		-0.023 (0.02)	-0.018 (0.02)
Female		0.164** (0.08)	0.157* (0.08)
Age		-0.002 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)
Staff (0/1)			0.279** (0.14)
MBA student			0.258** (0.13)
Constant	-0.668*** (0.25)	-0.596 (0.37)	-0.711* (0.36)

Table 5. OLS regression of Effect of Organizational Identification on Average Valence of Employees' Organizational Identity Categorizations

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Organizational Identification	0.242*** (0.07)	0.247** (0.11)
Number of Categorizations		0.017 (0.04)
Years of Affiliation		-0.013 (0.02)
Female		0.271 (0.18)
Age		-0.006 (0.01)
Constant	-0.971** (0.42)	-0.941 (0.60)

Table A.1 Spearman's rank correlations between identity categorization and everyday experience

Constituent Group	Correlation
Employee	0.61
Student	0.67
Faculty	0.84
Staff	0.48