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Evidence toward an expanded model of organizational identification

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Summary Recent research on organizational identification has called for the consideration of an expanded model of identification, which would include a more thorough treatment of the ways an individual could derive his or her identity from the organization. This paper begins to answer that call by testing operationalizations of the four dimensions of the expanded model: identification, disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification. Survey results from 330 employed adults support the discriminability of the four dimensions. This exploratory study also begins to establish the criterion-related validity of the model by examining organizational, job-related, and individual difference variables associated with the four dimensions of the model, and suggests implications for the expanded model's strong potential for applications in organizational identification research. Copyright © 2004 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Introduction

How an individual sees him or herself in relation to social groups is the foundation of many social-psychological theories (see Tajfel, 1981, for one example). Social identifications are self-descriptions based on a perceived overlap of individual and group identities. As Steele (1997, p. 613) explains, one is identified with an entity or domain 'in the sense of its being a part of one's self-definition, a personal identity to which one is self-evaluatively accountable.'

Organizational identification

In recent years, organization theorists have examined the ways people define themselves in terms of their relationships to organizations, thus applying the concept of social identifications to the workplace

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(Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Elsbach, 1999; Haslam, van Knippenberg, Platow, & Ellemers, 2003; Pratt, 1998). Organizational members are said to identify with the organization when they define themselves at least partly in terms of what the organization is thought to represent. It is this implication of the self-concept (Pratt, 1998) and perception of oneness (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) that distinguishes identification from related constructs like person–organization fit and organizational commitment: one identifies with a specific organization (and would feel a deep existential loss if forced to part) whereas one may discern good fit with a set of similar organizations and could come to feel committed to any of them. It is important to note that just as individuals may be satisfied with their jobs at the global or molar level ('I am satisfied with my job') and at the facet-specific level ('I am satisfied with my co-workers'), so too may individuals identify with their organization at the global level ('I identify with IBM') and with specific aspects of the organization ('I identify with IBM's innovativeness'). For example, Dukerich, Golden, and Shortell (2002) found that the organizational identification of physicians with their respective medical systems was predicted by the perceived attractiveness of specific aspects of those systems (e.g., bottom-line focus, state-of-the art medical technology, quality care for patients).

Interest in identification within the organizational context has grown considerably over the last decade, as it has emerged as an important variable in organizational behavior research (for reviews, see Pratt, 1998; Rousseau, 1998; Whetten & Godfrey, 1998). Identification has important implications at the individual, group, and organizational levels. Specifically, organizational identification has been found to be positively associated with performance and organizational citizenship behaviors, and negatively associated with turnover intentions and actual turnover (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Bartel, 2001; Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995; Haslam, 2001; Mael & Ashforth, 1995; Pratt, 1998; Tyler, 1999; van Knippenberg, 2000; Wan-Huggins, Riordan, & Griffeth, 1998). Organizational identification has also been argued to help foster a sense of meaning, belonging, and control at work (Ashforth, 2001). Given these outcomes for organizations and individuals alike, organizational identification is typically viewed by scholars and practitioners as a desirable attachment made by individuals to their employing organizations. Others, though, have explored the so-called 'darker side' of organizational identification (Dukerich, Kramer, & McLean Parks, 1998; Elsbach, 1999; Michel & Jehn, 2003). This perspective is concerned with the potential negative effects of identification on both individuals and organizations. For example, an 'overidentified' individual can become completely consumed by work and thereby lose a sense of individual identity, or might be less able to see faults of the organization or less willing to point them out.

Beyond organizational identification

Organization theorists have recently moved beyond basic organizational identification to encompass a wider and more complex range of possible forms of attachment to organizations (Ashforth, 2001; DiSanza & Bullis, 1999; Dukerich et al., 1998; Elsbach, 1999; Pratt, 2000). The rationale behind this pursuit of expansion is that identification is merely *one* way that an individual might derive a sense of self *vis-à-vis* the organization. Although research on organizational identification has been fruitful and highlighted important outcomes, it has largely focused on the overlapping of identities at the cost of exploring other forms of self-definition. How might a person see him or herself as being different from or in conflict with the organization? What if a person defined him or herself as partially the same as and partially different from the organization? And what effect would this have on the person and organization? These questions are not answered by examining merely organizational identification, and in this paper we advance the argument for examining an

'expanded model of identification' that includes multiple ways people can define themselves through organizational attachments.

Disidentification

Dukerich et al. (1998), DiSanza and Bullis (1999), Elsbach (1999), Pratt (2000), and Ashforth (2001) have speculated on one of these other forms of identification, '*dis*identification.' Disidentification occurs when an individual defines him or herself as *not* having the same attributes or principles that he or she believes define the organization (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). For example, someone strongly opposed to the values and mission of the American Civil Liberties Union may 'disidentify' with that group by espousing the opposite values and mission. Like identification, an individual may disidentify with an organization at the global or molar level and with specific aspects of the organization. Elsbach (1999) notes that disidentification is an active separation from the organization, not just a coincidental or benign mismatch of attributes. As applied to an organizational member, disidentification may entail a repulsion of the organization's mission, culture, or centrally defining aspects to the point that a person consciously or actively separates his or her identity and reputation from those of the organization. It may involve an employee concealing from others (through lying or deception) the details of his or her place of employment; being vocal about aspects of the organization that the person finds objectionable; and/or identifying characteristics that make him or her distinct from others in the organization.

It is important to note that disidentification is not merely the opposite of identification. We acknowledge a subtle complexity in the relationship between identification and disidentification: at first blush they seem to represent a bipolar, unidimensional variable. We argue, as has past research (Ashforth, 2001; DiSanza & Bullis, 1999; Dukerich et al., 1998; Elsbach, 1999, 2001; Pratt, 2000), that disidentification is a separate variable and a unique psychological state. Whereas identification consists of connecting (typically positive) aspects of the organization (whether at the molar or facet level) *to* oneself, disidentification consists of *dis*connecting (typically negative) aspects of the organization (whether at the molar or facet level) *from* oneself. Although a major goal of both identification and disidentification is preservation of a positive social identity, the paths to that goal and the phenomenology of the experience differ appreciably. An excellent example of the phenomenological contrast is Elsbach's (2001) qualitative study of the identification and disidentification of California legislative staff with the legislature. Elsbach demonstrated how staffers used self-identification tactics to outwardly establish both identification and disidentification with the legislature's organizational identity—'policy wonks' identified with policy-making practices while distancing themselves from political maneuvering, whereas the 'political hacks' identified with the politicking of the legislature, but disidentified with the mundane mechanics of law making.

Clearly, organizations would tend to see member disidentification as undesirable, as it represents the result of deep conflicts felt between the member and the organization. Both the turnover and the retention of strongly disidentified employees can be harmful to the organization. Previous research has documented the high costs of turnover (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Yet when disidentifying employees stay, managers must deal with individuals who hold strong negative views of the organization while being unable or unwilling to leave (for example, because of a poor labor market or golden handcuffs). This is exemplified by employees who, despite dissatisfaction, bad working conditions, etc., remain with the organization because of strong continuance and/or normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). However, it should be noted that while most managers would not desire disidentification of their employees, not all disidentification is inherently harmful to the organization. Disidentification might, in fact, lead to ultimately helpful behaviors such as whistle-blowing, innovation, and conscientious dissent (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1998).

Ambivalent identification

Dukerich et al. (1998), Elsbach (1999, 2001), Pratt and Doucet (2000), and Ashforth (2001) have also speculated that, given the complexity and equivocality of modern organizations and the loosely coupled values, goals, and beliefs of the typical individual, one can *simultaneously* identify and disidentify with one's organization (or aspects of it). This is called '*ambivalent identification*' (or schizo or conflicted identification). Social psychologists have long studied ambivalence in interpersonal relationships (such as marriage & friendships) and found that individuals are capable of (1) consciously attending to positive and negative aspects of another entity, and (2) maintaining the state of ambivalence over the long term, even for many years (Thompson & Holmes, 1996). Dukerich et al. (1998) offer the example of an individual who identifies with the cause of anti-abortionists in preserving human life but disidentifies with their tactic of blowing up abortion clinics. Examples abound for organizational employees as well. Consider what Meyerson and Scully (1995) call 'tempered radicals'—individuals who both identify with and are committed to their organizations while *also* being committed to a cause or ideology that is at odds with the identity of their organization. Examples could include critical theorists in business schools (who embrace the general ideologies of scholarship and learning, but are at odds with the predominant positivist paradigm), people of color in predominately white institutions (who might identify with the company's global identity, but feel their heritage and ethnicity are left out or denigrated), or gays in conservative institutions (who could feel strong identification with most of the values of the organization, but perceive that their lifestyle is not accepted). In each case, the person is pulled toward identification on some dimensions, but pulled toward disidentification on an important other dimension.

We noted earlier that an individual may identify with his or her organization and with specific aspects of it, and that an individual may disidentify with his or her organization and specific aspects of it. Here, we speculate that an individual may not only identify and disidentify with different aspects of his or her organization ('I identify with the firm's customer focus but disidentify with its emphasis on cost-cutting'), but that he or she may simultaneously identify and disidentify with the *same* aspects and with the organization itself. This is because a given aspect—and, of course, the organization itself—tends to be multifaceted (it has sub-aspects), such that one may have mixed feelings about the aspect. For example, regarding a firm's emphasis on cost-cutting, one may identify with the pursuit of efficiency but disidentify with the neglect of quality. Our argument, in short, is that only at the most reductionist level would the possibility of ambivalent identification cease to exist. Conversely, the higher the level of abstraction, the greater the potential for ambivalence.

To the degree that organization members experience ambivalent identification, they (1) use valuable cognitive and emotional resources that could otherwise be spent on organizationally helpful pursuits, and (2) likely are reluctant to go above and beyond the required level of job performance. The component of ambivalence that reflects the positive associations would be encouraged by most organizations, whereas the negative component would be discouraged. This mixed message can create isolation and stress for the ambivalent individual as well as perceptions of hypocrisy and pressures to conform (Meyerson & Scully, 1995).

Neutral identification

Finally, one's self-perception may be based on the explicit absence of both identification and disidentification with an organization; Elsbach (1999) termed this '*neutral identification*'. Consider an arbitrator whose job is to remain neutral toward both parties involved in a dispute, or an employee who perceives neither identity overlap with nor identity separation from his or her employer. Elsbach notes

that although the individual neither identifies nor disidentifies with the organization, the weakness of his or her affiliation may still be acknowledgeable, even salient. That is, rather than neutral identification merely being the *absence* of perceptions and attachment, it may be a cognitive state and mode of self-definition in its own right. Individuals may also consciously avoid extreme attachments (either positive or negative) because of past experiences with organizations ('once bitten, twice shy'), self-descriptions ('I'm a loner,' 'I'm my own person'), or management styles ('I don't take sides; I just do my job'). Hence, the actual *lack* of organizational identification and disidentification in itself can be self-defining to individuals. In most cases, neutral identification would be considered as a suboptimal state; an employee defining him or herself as neutral toward the organization (and its goals, values, mission) is less likely to feel engaged in and contribute to the organization than one who does, particularly via extra role behaviors.

These four states can be illustrated by crossing high and low levels of identification and disidentification, yielding the 2×2 'expanded model of identification' depicted in Figure 1.

Assessing the Expanded Model

While previous conceptual research has speculated on the existence of this expanded model, little empirical research exists on its specific dimensions or on its viability as a research avenue as a whole. Our goals in this study therefore were twofold. First, given the increasing interest of identity theorists in the expanded model of identification, we sought to operationalize three of the four cells (to complement an extant measure of organizational identification). Similarly, we sought to clarify their interrelatedness and uniqueness. Clearly, the four forms of identification are related conceptually. But are identification and disidentification *unique* constructs or merely opposite ends of the same continuum? Is ambivalent identification only the presence of two other psychological states (identification and disidentification) or is there a unique condition of ambivalence? Finally, is neutral identification merely the absence of identification and disidentification, or is the state of neutrality a condition worthy of study in its own right? We suspect that although ambivalent and neutral identification are derived theoretically from high/low combinations of identification and disidentification, there is a unique cognitive and affective state experienced in ambivalence and neutrality that is more than the sum of these combinations. And while much has been *theorized* about the relationships among these states of identification, an *empirical* examination of their similarities and differences has not been conducted (to our knowledge). Therefore, whether these constructs are in fact unique, and what their differences are, is still in doubt.

Hence, the following research question:

> *Research question 1*: Can the four cells in the expanded model of identification be shown to be related but discrete constructs?

Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) report the only published quantitative test of organizational disidentification, and there are no published quantitative tests of ambivalent or neutral identification (see DiSanza & Bullis, 1999; Elsbach, 2001; Pratt, 2000, for qualitative applications). For our purposes, however, the major limitation of Elsbach and Bhattacharya's work is that it deals not with organizational members but with the *public's* disidentification with an organization (the National Rifle Association). Thus, as a next step, it would be useful to find out why organizational *members* disidentify with their organizations. Hence, in this study, we developed measures of disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification—to complement an existing measure of identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992)—in order to test the expanded model of identification.

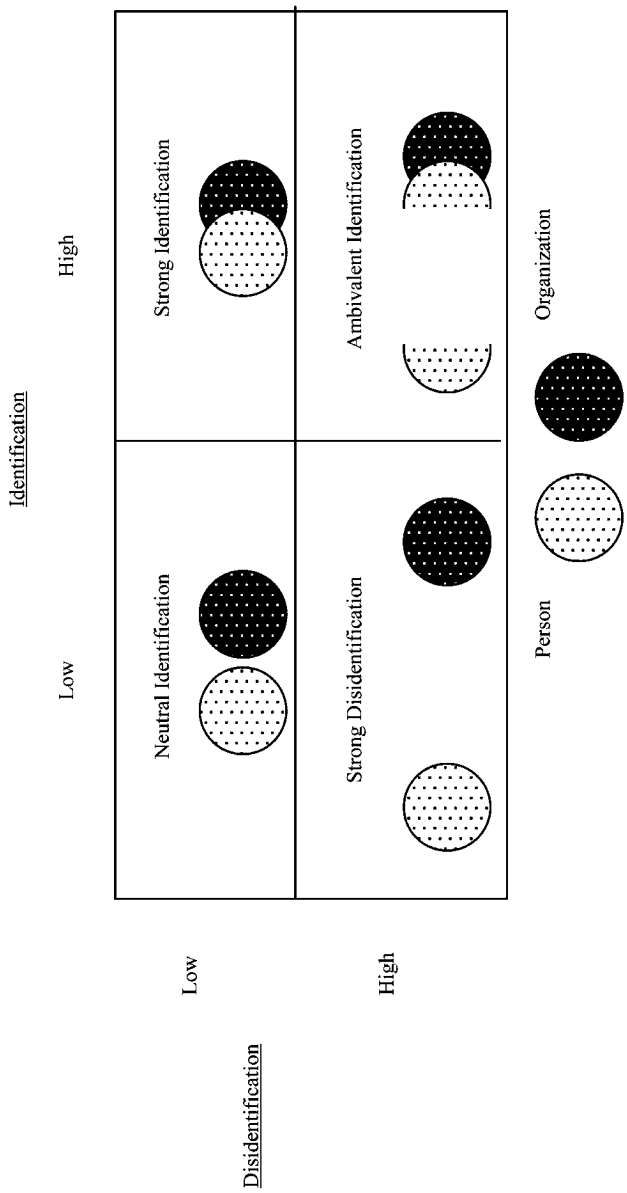

Figure 1. The expanded model of identification. (Adapted from Ashforth, 2001; Dukerich et al., 1998; Elsbach, 1999.)

Antecedents Associated with the Expanded Model

The second main objective of our exploratory study was to establish the criterion-related validity of the model. However, as Reade (2001, p. 1273) notes, 'there is not an established model of antecedents of organizational identification which has been in constant usage,' let alone an 'established model' of the newer constructs of disidentification and ambivalent and neutral identification. Consequently, we drew on past theoretical and empirical research to select those variables that appeared to be relevant to each of the four forms of identification. However, given the dearth of extant research clearly documenting antecedents to the expanded model, our study is necessarily exploratory. Hence, we chose variables to be representative of a broad pool of potential antecedents. Therefore, the hypothesized antecedents are not exhaustive, but rather are suggestive of the types of relationships we expect to see affecting the expanded model.

We sought to include a diverse range of antecedents in order to capture phenomena at various levels of the worker's experience. We therefore include variables at the organizational, job, and individual levels, as they have been shown to directly affect employees' identification (see reviews by Haslam, 2001; Pratt, 1998). We selected variables that have often been linked either positively or negatively to the broader construct of work adjustment (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress) that appear particularly relevant to the expanded model of identification.

Antecedents associated with identification and disidentification

Our first set of hypotheses focus on identification and disidentification, which represent, on one hand, opposing outcomes of workplace and individual phenomena. (For while identification is about defining oneself as *similar* to an organization, disidentification is about defining oneself as *different* from an organization.) This opposing nature suggests that identification and disidentification would share many antecedents (though have an inverse relationship). Yet, on the other hand, previous conceptual and empirical work on disidentification has argued for and demonstrated its unique aspects and contributions beyond being an opposite of identification (Dukerich et al., 1998; Elsbach, 1999, 2001; Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). This work considers the path leading to disidentification as distinct from the path to identification, and acknowledges the complex differences between them. Hence, though related, we predict that identification and disidentification will *also* have unique antecedents.

At the organizational level, previous research suggests that organizational reputation is closely related to both an employee's identification *and* disidentification. Gotsi and Wilson (2001, p. 29) define corporate or organizational reputation as 'a stakeholder's overall evaluation of a company over time.' A positive reputation is likely to address members' desires for self-enhancement (Dutton et al., 1994) as they 'bask in the reflected glory' of the organization (Cialdini et al., 1976). Thus, a positive organizational reputation has been associated with identification among members and former members (Dukerich et al., 2002; Iyer, Bamber, & Barefield, 1997; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Reade, 2001; Smidts, Pruyn, & van Riel, 2001).

Similarly, a positive reputation likely inoculates members against disidentification. That is, a positive reputation functions as a social resource, fostering member goodwill and confidence that the organization will surmount various problematic issues that may arise, and enabling members to put intractable issues 'in perspective' relative to the organization's strengths. For example, Dutton and Dukerich (1991) describe how the ethical, can-do identity of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey encouraged members to believe in the Port Authority as it grappled with the difficult

and publicly visible issue of homeless people in its facilities. A positive reputation buffers individuals from problematic events and situations that might otherwise undermine identification. Additionally, a *negative* reputation is likely to undermine desires for self-enhancement and thereby foster disidentification. For instance, Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001, p. 400) concluded that 'disidentifications appeared to be motivated by respondents' desires to maintain and affirm a positive sense of self by separating themselves from the salient but unattractive reputation of the NRA.'

An organizational-level variable that is likely to be uniquely associated with identification is organization identity (OI) strength. Albert and Whetten (1985) define OI as the central, distinctive, and enduring characteristics of an organization. (Recently, however, some scholars have questioned whether an OI is necessarily enduring; for example, Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000). Dutton et al. (1994) argue that the more attractive the OI is to the individual member, the stronger his or her identification with the organization. An attractive OI provides a sense of self-enhancement, self-distinctiveness, and self-continuity—paralleling Albert and Whetten's (1985) three attributes. We define a *strong* OI as one that is widely shared and deeply held by organizational members. A strong OI likely provides a clear beacon for prospective organizational members ('This is who we are'), allowing them to decide if the OI suits their needs and wants. Thus, an organization with a strong OI will tend to attract and retain those who feel some resonance with the OI (Ashforth & Mael, 1996).

Previous research has had little to say about individual-level antecedents of organizational identification and disidentification. Glynn (1998) suggests one particularly promising exception. She speculates that, although all individuals are at least somewhat receptive to identification (as a means of fostering a sense of belonging and self), 'individuals might differ in their propensity to identify with social objects' (Glynn, 1998, p. 238)—a propensity that she dubbed the need for organizational identification (NOID). She further argues that NOID should be positively associated with a desire to be 'imprinted upon' (Glynn, 1998, p. 240) by an organization and receptivity to socialization, and negatively associated with a desire for separateness from the organization. Clearly, then, NOID should be positively associated with identification and negatively associated with disidentification. However, we found no published studies examining the NOID construct.

We selected three other variables that have often been linked either positively or negatively to work adjustment that appear particularly relevant to identification and/or disidentification: positive affectivity, negative affectivity, and cynicism. Individuals with high positive affectivity are predisposed to experience pleasant affective states over time and across situations, whereas individuals with high negative affectivity are predisposed to experience unpleasant states (George, 1992; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Cynicism, as used here, reflects 'a general attitude that one cannot depend on other people to be trustworthy and sincere' (Andersson & Bateman, 1997, p. 450). Although both negative affectivity and cynicism suggest a certain negativity and even pessimism in outlook, cynicism is an attitude toward others whereas negative affectivity is a trait that is not tied to any particular external referent (indeed, the two constructs were modestly correlated at $r = 0.21$ in the present study).

Although far less studied than negative affectivity, positive affectivity has been found to have at least indirect positive associations with indicators of work adjustment such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and motivation (Chiu, 2000; Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993). We speculate that individuals who experience pleasant affective states should be more willing and able to perceive potentially positive elements of an organization—to see the organization in a positive or optimistic light (Watson, 2002)–and consequently to identify with the organization. Further, Shaw, Duffy, Abdulla, and Singh (2000) argue that, following the affect-matching hypothesis, affectivity should predict outcomes from the same affective domain.

Negative affectivity and cynicism have been found to be inversely related to work adjustment. For example, negative affectivity has been negatively associated with job satisfaction and positively associated with strain, workplace deviance, and withdrawal behaviors (Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999;

Moyle, 1995; Necowitz & Roznowski, 1994),[1] and cynicism has been negatively associated with job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors (Abraham, 2000; Andersson & Bateman, 1997). In regard to the expanded model of identification, we suspect that individuals who are cynical and have high negative affectivity will be more likely to disidentify because they tend to see people and institutions (and other social units) in a negative or pessimistic light; they are more inclined to embrace potential negative experiences, cognitions, and attitudes (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989; Watson et al., 1988).[2]

Thus, we predict that positive affectivity will be positively associated with identification, whereas negative affectivity and cynicism will be positively associated with disidentification. If positive affectivity predisposes individuals to look for and find the 'best' in an organization, negative affectivity and cynicism predispose them to look for and find the 'worst.'

In terms of more job-related variables, psychological contract breach is likely to be uniquely associated with disidentification. Psychological contracts are the idiosyncratic obligations and expectations perceived by each employee (Rousseau, 1995). Key to the notion of psychological contracts is reciprocity—as an employee contributes more to an organization, his or her expectations about what is owed tend to increase. Then, as the organization meets various expectations of the employee, that side of this often-implicit contract becomes increasingly fulfilled. The dynamics of psychological contracts have been linked to organizational identification in previous conceptual work (e.g., Rousseau, 1998), but little of this relationship has been demonstrated empirically. Past research, though, has shown that the *breach* of psychological contracts is more the norm than their fulfillment, and that breach has a more direct link to workplace outcomes (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). When psychological contracts are violated, individuals are likely to declare themselves as more principled than their employer (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994), thereby distancing themselves psychologically through disidentification. Following a breach, employees are more likely to look for faults and shortcomings of the organization in order to explain their disappointment, and are thereby more likely to find aspects of the organization with which to disidentify.

The preceding discussion leads to our first two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: (a) Organizational reputation, (b) OI strength, (c) NOID, and (d) positive affectivity will be positively associated with identification.

Hypothesis 2: (a) Organizational reputation and (b) NOID will be negatively associated with disidentification; whereas (c) negative affectivity, (d) cynicism, and (e) psychological contract breach will be positively associated with disidentification.

Table 1 contains a summary of all hypotheses in the study.

Antecedents associated with ambivalent identification

Ambivalent identification indicates the presence of both identification and disidentification. It represents a state of simultaneously holding two contrary positions about one's organization—such as loving some aspects while hating others. We therefore chose two constructs that specifically represent

[1] It should be noted that there is some controversy regarding (1) whether the effects of negative (and positive) affectivity on work adjustment are direct or indirect, and (2) whether negative (and positive) affectivity should be regarded as a substantive cause of adjustment or a source of self-report bias to be partialled out (for example, Chan, 2001; Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000).

[2] It should be noted, however, that individuals who are cynical and/or have high negative affectivity may identify with organizations that are countercultural or stigmatized precisely because such organizations are a counterpoint to the status quo. Examples include protest or social movement organizations, and illegal or otherwise 'underground' or 'dirty work' organizations (e.g., Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Jankowski, 1991). Given our university alumni sample, we assumed that the overwhelming majority would not be employed by countercultural organizations.

Table 1. Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Antecedent	Outcome	Relationship
1a	Org. reputation	Identification	+
1b	OI strength	Identification	+
1c	NOID	Identification	+
1d	Positive affectivity	Identification	+
2a	Org. reputation	Disidentification	−
2b	NOID	Disidentification	−
2c	Negative affectivity	Disidentification	+
2d	Cynicism	Disidentification	+
2e	Contract breach	Disidentification	+
3a	OI incongruence	Ambivalent identification	+
3b	Intrarole conflict	Ambivalent identification	+
4a	OI strength	Neutral identification	−
4b	Individualism	Neutral identification	+

conditions of conflict or divided loyalties as antecedents likely to be associated with ambivalent identification.

The first construct, OI incongruence, refers to an organization that sends contradictory or mixed messages to its stakeholders regarding what it stands for and why. Organizations often have multiple or hybrid identities, although these identities need not be contradictory or shared by all members (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Multiple identities are likely to emerge and become contradictory if the organization is dealing with contradictory demands from the environment or key stakeholders or is in a state of flux. For example, Glynn (2000) describes how the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, in response to the demands of musicians and administrators, respectively, espoused the somewhat contradictory identities of artistic excellence and economic utility. It seems likely that the mixed messages associated with an incongruent OI will foster correspondingly mixed attitudes and ambivalent identification: employees may identify with one set of messages while disidentifying with another. Elsbach (2001), for instance, describes the ambivalence of 'policy wonks' in the California legislative staff who identified with the policy-making dimension of the legislature while disidentifying with the partisan politics.

The second antecedent argued to be associated with ambivalent identification, intrarole conflict, refers to incompatible demands from within a given role (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). The nature of intrarole conflict centers on a tension created by opposing forces acting on an individual. Those forces (such as co-worker or supervisor expectations, ethical considerations, and divided loyalties) converge on the individual, creating a sense of torment or conflict. Meta-analyses indicate that role conflict is positively associated with various facets of work maladjustment, such as stress and job dissatisfaction (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Because roles often have strong identity implications for the individual (Ashforth, 2001), the source of role conflict is often identity laden. That is, a person may experience incompatible demands on their identity, such as a professor strongly identifying with the research component of the role while disidentifying with the teaching component. We contend that the tormented nature of role conflict will also lead to an ambivalent stance toward the organization; when individuals experience clashes in their role expectations and role identities, they are more likely to carry over the dual nature of those cognitions to appraisals of the organization. Hence:

Hypothesis 3: (a) OI incongruence and (b) intrarole conflict will be positively associated with ambivalent identification.

Antecedents associated with neutral identification

Neutral identification is a state of neither identifying nor disidentifying with an organization. Yet, as noted, previous conceptual work has posited that neutral identification is more than the mere absence of a phenomenon; a person can define him or herself *vis-à-vis* neutrality toward the organization (Dukerich et al., 1998; Elsbach, 1999). We therefore chose two variables that would likely be central to neutrality: one whose presence would make neutrality difficult and one that would lead to it.

The first antecedent is a strong OI. A strong identity, as noted, provides a clear and consistent signal about what the organization represents and how and why it does so. Thus, it becomes difficult to remain neutral toward an organization that espouses and enacts a strong OI: members are likely to polarize into believers and non-believers. As Iannaccone (1994, p. 1188) concluded from a study of churches with strong identities, 'potential members are forced to choose whether to participate fully or not at all.' Accordingly, we predict that a strong OI will be negatively related to neutral identification.

The second antecedent, individualism, is an individual difference variable. Individualists 'place their personal goals above the goals of collectives' (Triandis et al., 1986, p. 258). Research reviewed by Earley and Gibson (1998) indicates that, compared to collectivists (who subordinate personal goals to the collective), individualists are less cooperative, less likely to say 'we' than 'I' when communicating with ingroup members, more resistant to teams, perform better when working alone, and prefer individually based compensation and equity (rather than equality) allocations. Given individualists' preference for personal goals and some psychological separation from ingroups, we argue that they are less likely to care enough about their employing organization to either identify *or* disidentify with it. They are unlikely to define themselves in terms of their organization, either positively or negatively, because their primary interests are within themselves. Accordingly:

> *Hypothesis 4*: (a) OI strength will be negatively associated with neutral identification; whereas (b) individualism will be positively associated with neutral identification.

Organizational Context

This research was conducted in the summer of 2001. The alumni association at Arizona State University (ASU) provided us with alumni names and contact information for our research. We selected graduation dates between 1981 and 1990, giving us a 10-year window of graduates from bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs across all colleges and departments at the university. Being ASU graduates, the majority of subjects still lived in the southwestern United States, but our sample was spread out across the country. Respondents worked for a wide variety of organizations and held an array of jobs and position levels. Hence, rather than investigating phenomena in *one* context, we sought to study *across* contexts.

Methodology

Sample

Surveys were sent to alumni from a major public university who had graduated during the years 1981–1990. We imposed the ceiling of 1990 on our sample because, given our cross-sectional design,

we sought relatively experienced individuals who would likely have developed more or less stable adjustments to their work contexts. Respondents had participated three months previously in another study by the researchers; data for this study come entirely from a separate (second) survey. The university's alumni association provided names stratified by graduating year, degree earned, major, and gender. We followed a modified Dillman (1978) procedure, including a small reward with each survey and entering respondents into a draw for prizes of cash and university merchandise. Three weeks later, surveys were sent again to non-respondents. Of the 517 people sent this study's survey, 338 returned them, yielding a 65 per cent response rate. There were no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents on any of the seven control variables (see below). Of the 338 responses, eight were unusable, leaving 330 for analysis. Note that while previous research has measured alumni identification with their *university* (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), the target of this questionnaire was the alumnus' current *employing organization*. Hence, respondents referred to their attitudes and information about their workplace, not their former university. This design allowed us to obtain data from a diverse population working in a wide variety of organizations and occupations.

Ninety-two per cent of the respondents were white; 56 per cent were female; 72 per cent were married or living with a partner. The average age was 43.6 years (S.D. = 7.8), and 59 per cent had children living at home. The average organizational tenure was 8.8 years (S.D. = 7.3), and average job tenure was 5.9 years (S.D. = 5.1). Average organizational size was 4 308 members (S.D. = 11 785). Eleven per cent self-identified as top management, 16 per cent as middle management, 6 per cent as supervisor, 5 per cent as specialist, 53 per cent as professional, and 10 per cent as 'other.' Thirty-four per cent had completed bachelor degrees; 46 per cent had completed master degrees; and 21 per cent had completed doctoral degrees.

Measures

We used a combination of new and existing measures in the study. For new measures, because of the existing theory on the expanded model of identification and its antecedents, we used deductive scale development (Hinkin, 1995), where an a priori classification scheme is used to generate specific items (as compared to inductive scale development, where variables are created a posteriori from items). Scales were constructed so as to balance adequate domain sampling and internal consistency on the one hand, and parsimony on the other. Specifically, we followed Hinkin's recommendations, such as using 5-point Likert-type response scales. (Unless otherwise noted, each variable in the study was measured on a Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.)

Identification, disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification

Organizational identification was measured with Mael's (unpublished, 1988; Mael & Ashforth, 1992) 6-item scale (see Appendix).[3] We developed measures of disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification to complement this measure. Each of these constructs was measured by six items. As mentioned, Elsbach and Bhattacharya's (2001) disidentification scale was created for people *external* to an organization rather than for employees; hence, we operationalized organizational dis-

[3]In terms of the nomological network of organizational behavior constructs, the construct of organizational identification is perhaps most similar to that of organizational commitment. Part of the similarity—indeed, the confusion—stems from conceptualizations of commitment that included identification as a subcomponent. However, recent reviews by Pratt (1998) and van Dick (in press) indicate that: (1) as noted, the two concepts are currently defined differently (commitment is an attitude toward an organization, whereas identification is a deeper, more existential connection entailing a perceived oneness with an organization); (2) although measures of identification and commitment tend to be strongly correlated ($0.60 \leq r \leq 0.70$), confirmatory factor analyses suggest that some measures (including Mael's) are differentiable; and (3) identification and commitment have been argued to develop from different sources.

identification such that it expresses self-definition via a cognitive and affective separation from the *employing* organization—when a person distances him or herself from it while nonetheless remaining a member of it ($\alpha = 0.90$); a sample item is, 'I have tried to keep the organization I work for a secret from people I meet.' Ambivalent identification was operationalized with items measuring mixed feelings about one's association with the organization ($\alpha = 0.92$); a sample item is, 'I find myself being both proud and embarrassed to be a part of this organization.' And neutral identification was operationalized with items measuring one's lack of identifying and disidentifying with the employing organization ($\alpha = 0.94$); a sample item is, 'I'm pretty neutral toward the success or failure of this organization.' (All new measures in the study are presented in the Appendix.)

Antecedents

As for individual-level variables, for positive and negative affectivity, we used Watson et al.'s (1988) 20-item measure, the PANAS scale; respondents are asked to what extent they generally feel various emotions, such as 'inspired' for positive affectivity ($\alpha = 0.90$) and 'irritable' for negative affectivity ($\alpha = 0.86$) (where 1 = not at all, 5 = very much or completely). For cynicism, we used Kanter and Mirvis' (1989) 7-item measure ($\alpha = 0.86$); a sample item is, 'Most people are just out for themselves.' Individualism was assessed by the 7-item measure in Triandis et al. (1986) ($\alpha = 0.62$); a sample item is 'One does better working alone than in a group.' We created a measure for NOID ($\alpha = 0.75$) such that items focus on the individual's generalized desire to derive at least a partial self-definition from a work organization of which he or she is a member; a sample item is, 'Without an organization to work for, I would feel incomplete.'

For job-related antecedents, we used Rizzo et al.'s (1970) 8-item measure for intrarole conflict ($\alpha = 0.88$); a sample item is, 'I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.' Psychological contract breach was assessed with Robinson and Rousseau's (1994) reverse-scoring approach to the question, 'Using the scale below, please indicate how well, overall, your employer has fulfilled the promised obligations that they owed you' (where 1 = very poorly fulfilled, 5 = very well fulfilled).

For organization-level antecedents, we created measures for perceived OI strength ($\alpha = 0.89$) and OI incongruence ($\alpha = 0.92$). The items for OI strength focus on the extent to which there is a common sense of purpose, clear and unique vision, feeling of unity, and specific mission; a sample item is, 'This organization has a clear and unique vision.' The items for OI incongruence focus on the extent to which the mission, goals, values, and beliefs of the organization are inconsistent; a sample item is, 'My organization sends mixed messages concerning what it cares about.' For organizational reputation, we used Wan-Huggins et al.'s (1998) 5-item measure ($\alpha = 0.88$); a sample item is 'I think this company has a good reputation in the community.' Given our diverse sample of individuals and organizations, we cannot aggregate individual responses to the organizational level. Thus, we are assuming that individuals are more or less reliable informants about their respective organizations.

Control variables

We included seven control variables. The first three—gender, age, and education—represent traditional demographic controls used in person–organization research, and each has been found at times to be modestly correlated with organizational identification (e.g., Lee, 1971; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000; Wan-Huggins et al., 1998). The fourth and fifth controls, organizational and job tenure, may both be positively (negatively) associated with organizational identification (disidentification) because individuals are likely to remain in organizations and jobs with which they personally resonate and to become more psychologically identified with the organization and job as they spend time with each. Indeed, although the association between job tenure and organizational identification has not been studied (to our knowledge), studies generally find a positive correlation between organizational tenure and identification (e.g., Schneider, Hall, & Nygren, 1971; Wan-Huggins et al., 1998). The sixth

control, being a manager or supervisor (vs. not), is included because it seems likely that managers and supervisors would be expected to identify with their employers and to be rewarded for doing so (and punished for not doing so), and that individuals who display identification would be promoted into such positions (Jackall, 1988). However, research has suggested mixed support for the association between managerial status and organizational identification (Cheney, 1983; Rotondi, 1975). Finally, organization size is included as a control not only because it may be directly related to identification (for example, one could argue that small organizations tend to provide a more proximal and clear referent for identification or, conversely, that larger organizations tend to provide more diverse 'identity hooks' for identification),[4] but because it may be confounded with the organizational antecedents: OI strength, organizational reputation, and OI incongruence.

The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations of the variables are presented in Table 2.

Results

Factor structure of the expanded model

Our Research Question speculated whether the four facets of the expanded model would be correlated but discrete. The correlation matrix in Table 2 shows that identification was negatively correlated at moderate to strong levels ($-0.39 \leq r \leq -0.64$) with the other three dimensions, while those dimensions were positively correlated among themselves at moderate to strong levels ($0.44 \leq r \leq 0.66$). Because the four constructs are obviously not orthogonal, the significant correlations are not surprising. What *is* surprising is the negative correlations of ambivalent and neutral identification with identification compared to the positive correlations of ambivalent and neutral identification with disidentification. After all, as Figure 1 illustrates, ambivalent and neutral identification are essentially derived from both identification and disidentification such that there is no a priori reason to expect the negative vs. positive differences. We will return to this intriguing issue in the Discussion.

To ascertain whether the four constructs are discrete, despite their moderate to strong correlations, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. Using LISREL 8.3, the analysis yielded the following fit indices: $\chi^2_{(246)} = 810.85$ ($p \leq 0.01$), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.084, normed fit index (NFI) = 0.96, nonnormed fit index (NNFI) = 0.97, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.97, incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.97, standardized root mean square residual (SRMSR) = 0.06, and goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.83. Although the χ^2 is significant, the GFI falls short of the recommended threshold of 0.90, and the SRMSR exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.05, the remaining indices are safely within their recommended thresholds (Kelloway, 1998). Thus, the indices tend to be on the cusp, with some indicating good fit and some not. The four-factor model represents a significantly better fit over (1) a one-factor model that implicitly tests for a common method factor (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), $\chi^2_{(6)}$ difference = 4218.16, $p \leq 0.01$, (2) a two-factor model comprising identification and a composite of the other three moderately correlated constructs—$\chi^2_{(5)}$ difference = 3295.08, $p \leq 0.01$, and (3) a three-factor model comprising identification, neutral identification, and a composite of the other two (most highly correlated) constructs—$\chi^2_{(3)}$ difference = 947.85, $p \leq 0.01$.

[4]A study by Ashforth, Saks, and Lee (1998) of newcomers in diverse organizations found that organization size was negatively related to organizational identification at 4 months but not at 10 months.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities[a]

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Controls																							
1. Gender[b]	0.44	0.50	—																				
2. Age	43.60	7.80	−0.14	—																			
3. Education	1.87	0.73	0.14	0.33	—																		
4. Organizational tenure	8.75	7.32	−0.10	0.32	0.16	—																	
5. Manager/supervisor[c]	0.32	0.47	0.10	−0.11	−0.12	−0.12	—																
6. Organization size	8567	42118	−0.01	−0.04	−0.10	0.01	0.06	—															
7. Job tenure	8.56	7.25	−0.15	0.22	0.10	0.39	−0.19	−0.01	—														
Antecedents																							
8. OI strength	3.57	0.90	−0.06	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.00	−0.05	0.19	(0.89)													
9. Organizational reputation	3.93	0.76	−0.04	−0.07	0.03	0.08	0.00	0.04	0.10	0.63	(0.88)												
10. OI incongruence	2.49	0.99	0.07	0.11	0.01	0.00	−0.07	0.03	−0.15	−0.72	−0.61	(0.92)											
11. Intrarole conflict	2.73	0.84	0.15	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.10	−0.04	−0.14	−0.48	−0.44	0.56	(0.88)										
12. Psychological contract breach	2.36	0.95	−0.03	0.03	−0.03	−0.08	−0.08	0.06	−0.06	−0.48	−0.48	0.50	0.43	—									
13. Need for organizational ident.	3.49	0.64	0.01	0.01	0.07	−0.01	0.20	0.00	−0.04	0.12	0.12	−0.15	−0.08	−0.17	(0.75)								
14. Positive affectivity	3.61	0.67	−0.04	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.09	−0.01	0.09	0.48	0.41	−0.40	−0.31	−0.30	0.25	(0.90)							
15. Negative affectivity	1.75	0.54	0.05	−0.02	0.00	−0.05	−0.05	−0.01	−0.04	−0.34	−0.31	0.37	0.38	0.30	0.02	−0.33	(0.86)						
16. Individualism	2.81	0.53	0.10	−0.05	0.11	−0.10	−0.13	−0.07	0.01	−0.11	−0.17	0.11	0.13	0.10	−0.22	−0.17	0.03	(0.62)					
17. Cynicism	2.66	0.67	0.09	−0.16	−0.14	−0.16	−0.06	0.01	−0.06	−0.21	−0.30	0.24	0.18	0.22	−0.13	−0.22	0.22	0.20	(0.86)				
Forms of identification																							
18. Identification	3.52	0.72	0.10	0.00	0.07	0.02	0.23	−0.02	0.07	**0.40**	**0.36**	−0.41	−0.28	−0.29	**0.57**	**0.43**	−0.15	−0.22	−0.25	(0.86)			
19. Disidentification	1.72	0.75	0.02	0.08	0.04	−0.03	−0.13	0.03	−0.10	−0.52	**−0.61**	0.62	0.52	**0.53**	**−0.24**	−0.36	**0.41**	0.19	**0.30**	−0.47	(0.90)		
20. Ambivalent identification	2.43	0.93	0.04	0.00	−0.05	−0.03	−0.09	0.04	−0.08	−0.57	−0.55	**0.66**	**0.58**	0.51	−0.17	−0.39	0.43	0.19	0.26	−0.39	0.66	(0.92)	
21. Neutral identification	1.82	0.76	0.00	0.03	−0.08	−0.11	−0.22	0.02	−0.12	**−0.37**	−0.39	0.43	0.28	0.32	−0.42	−0.48	0.21	**0.30**	0.27	−0.64	0.60	0.44	(0.94)

[a] $N = 330$. Correlations ≥ 0.11 are significant at $p \leq 0.05$; those ≥ 0.15 are significant at $p \leq 0.01$. Cronbach alpha coefficients are on the diagonal. **Bold** items represent hypothesized relationships.
[b] 1 = male; 0 = female.
[c] 1 = manager or supervisor; 0 = not.

For three reasons, we refrained from deleting items from the four-factor model in order to enhance the goodness of fit: (1) the pattern of factor loadings supports the discriminability of the four scales (in addition to the confirmatory factory analysis, an exploratory factor analysis with an oblique [oblimin] rotation indicated that all items loaded on their intended factor at 0.53 or higher, and no cross-loading exceeded 0.30), (2) given the exploratory nature of the study, we did not want to 'overfit' the measures to the specific data at hand, and (3) deleting the three most 'problematic' items (i.e., ambivalence item 6, disidentification item 3, and identification item 6) did not improve the fit significantly. Thus, we used the full 24 items in our subsequent analyses. (We reran the regression analyses described below with the three most problematic items deleted and found only inconsequential differences in the results.)

Assessing the hypothesized antecedents of the expanded model

The correlation matrix in Table 2 shows that all 13 associations posited in Hypotheses 1 through 4 were supported (at $p \leq 0.01$). However, these bivariate correlations do not control for shared variance among the antecedents. Thus, we conducted two rounds of regression analyses. For the first round, identification, disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification were each regressed in hierarchical fashion on: (1) the seven control variables (i.e., gender, age, education, job and organizational tenure, manager/supervisor [vs. not], and organization size), and (2) the 10 antecedents (i.e., OI strength, organizational reputation, OI incongruence, intrarole conflict, psychological contract breach, NOID, positive and negative affectivity, individualism, and cynicism). Although the hypotheses included only a limited number of antecedents for each facet of identification, we included all variables in the study in each regression equation. We did this because it reflects a more realistic picture of the interrelationship of the variables and it may offer insights into these relationships above and beyond our formal hypotheses. Given the large number of variables and the significant correlations among many of them, this represents a rigorous test of Hypotheses 1–4. Ten of the 13 hypothesized relationships were significant using this test (H1c: NOID → identification; H1d: positive affectivity → identification; H2a: reputation → disidentification; H2b: NOID → disidentification; H2c: negative affectivity → disidentification; H2d: cynicism → disidentification; H2e: contract breach → disidentification; H3a: OI incongruence → ambivalent identification; H3b: intrarole conflict → ambivalent identification; and H4b: individualism → neutral identification). The exceptions were that organizational reputation and OI strength were not related to identification (H1a and H1b, respectively) and OI strength was not related to neutral identification (H4a).

For the second round of analyses, we conducted an even stricter test of the hypotheses. In addition to the controls and antecedents used in the first wave, we also included every other form of identification as control variables. For example, in predicting identification, we used disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification as controls. This test demonstrates the unique variance explained in each of the four dimensions of the expanded model. Given that the mean absolute correlation among the four dimensions is $r = 0.53$, this represents a very stringent test of the hypotheses. Eight of the 13 hypothesized relationships were significant using this test (H1c: NOID → identification; H1d: positive affectivity → identification; H2a: reputation → disidentification; H2c: negative affectivity → disidentification; H2e: contract breach → disidentification; H3a: OI incongruence → ambivalent identification; H3b: intrarole conflict → ambivalent identification; and H4b: individualism → neutral identification). The exceptions were that organizational reputation and OI strength were again not associated with identification (H1a and H1b, respectively), NOID and cynicism were no longer associated with disidentification (H2b and H2d, respectively), and OI strength was again not associated with neutral identification (H4a). Table 3 provides the results of both tests. For the strictest test, the 10 antecedents in step 3 produced changes in R^2 ranging from 0.06 for

Table 3. Hierarchical regression results[a]

Independent variables	Dependent variables[d]							
	Identification		Disidentification		Ambivalent identification		Neutral identification	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Step 1: Controls								
Gender[b]	0.13**	0.13**	−0.03	−0.03	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.06
Age	−0.07	0.00	0.07	0.03	−0.03	−0.05	0.17*	0.12*
Education	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.07+	−0.04	−0.05	−0.12*	−0.11*
Organizational tenure	0.01	−0.01	0.03	0.04	−0.01	−0.01	−0.04	−0.05
Manager/supervisor[c]	0.10*	0.06	−0.08+	−0.03	−0.02	−0.01	−0.12*	−0.06
Organization size	−0.03	−0.04	0.04	0.05	−0.04	−0.05	−0.03	−0.06
Job tenure	0.04	0.02	−0.04	−0.04	0.05	0.06	−0.06	−0.03
ΔR^2	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.11	0.11
ΔF	3.17**	3.17**	2.00+	2.00+	1.01	1.01	4.33***	4.33***
Step 2: Other identification variables								
Identification	NA	NA	NA	−0.02	NA	0.06	NA	−0.36***
Disidentification	NA	−0.03	NA	NA	NA	0.26***	NA	0.38***
Ambivalent identification	NA	0.06	NA	0.24***	NA	NA	NA	0.01
Neutral identification	NA	−0.37***	NA	0.31***	NA	0.01	NA	NA
ΔR^2	NA	0.37	NA	0.51	NA	0.43	NA	0.43
ΔF	NA	53.13***	NA	92.65***	NA	63.35***	NA	73.23***
Step 3: Antecedents								
OI strength	**H1b: 0.12**	**0.09**	0.06	0.09	−0.03	−0.05	**H4a: −0.07**	**−0.05**
Organizational reputation	**H1a: 0.03**	**0.02**	**H2a: −0.30*** **	**−0.27*** **	−0.11+	−0.03	−0.01	0.12+
OI incongruence	−0.11	−0.08	0.14*	0.02	**H3a: 0.33*** **	**0.30*** **	0.15+	0.05
Intrarole conflict	−0.07	−0.07	0.16**	0.11*	**H3b: 0.18** **	**0.14***	0.01	−0.08
Psych. contract breach	0.01	0.03	**H2e: 0.20*** **	**0.14** **	0.17**	0.11*	0.05	−0.03
NOID	**H1c: 0.44*** **	**0.35*** **	**H2b: −0.11** **	**−0.01**	−0.05	−0.05	−0.24***	−0.04
Positive affectivity	**H1d: 0.18** **	**0.11***	0.01	0.09+	−0.06	−0.07	−0.19**	−0.13*
Negative affectivity	0.01	0.00	**H2c: 0.14***	**0.12** **	0.11*	0.08	−0.02	−0.07
Individualism	−0.03	0.04	0.02	−0.06	0.06	0.06	**H4b: 0.21*** **	**0.19*** **
Cynicism	−0.10+	−0.05	**H2d: 0.11***	**0.07**	0.01	−0.01	0.13*	0.05
ΔR^2	0.42	0.13	0.53	0.10	0.58	0.17	0.34	0.06
ΔF	19.54***	7.05***	29.15***	7.02***	33.81***	10.83***	14.50***	3.28**

[a]Entries represent standardized beta coefficients after the final step.

[b]1 = male; 0 = female.

[c]1 = manager or supervisor; 0 = not.

[d]The first column of beta coefficients under each dependent variable excludes the identification variables from the regression equation (skipping step 2); the second column of beta coefficients includes the identification variables in the regression equation. **Bold** items represent formally hypothesized relationships. All items are included to demonstrate the unique patterns of antecedents for each of the four forms of identification.

$+p \leq 0.10$; $*p \leq 0.05$; $**p \leq 0.01$; $***p \leq 0.001$.

neutral identification to 0.17 for ambivalent identification (all $p \leq 0.01$ or $p \leq 0.001$). In step 2 of that test, identification variables produced changes in R^2 ranging from 0.37 for identification to 0.51 for disidentification (all $p \leq 0.001$).

In summary, as posited in Hypothesis 1, identification was positively associated with NOID and positive affectivity. However, contrary to the hypothesis, identification was not associated with organizational reputation and OI strength. As Hypothesis 2 predicted, disidentification was negatively associated with organizational reputation and—only with the less stringent test—NOID, and positively associated with negative affectivity, cynicism (less stringent test), and psychological contract breach. As predicted in Hypothesis 3, ambivalent identification was positively associated with OI incongruence and intrarole conflict. As Hypothesis 4 predicted, neutral identification was positively associated with individualism; however, neutral identification was not associated with OI strength.

Discussion

A number of organizational scholars have urged the examination not merely of an *overlap* between individual and social identities (identification), but of an overt *separation* of those identities (disidentification), a *mixing* of overlap and separation of those identities (ambivalent identification), and a *disinterest* toward those identities (neutral identification). This 'expanded model of identification' represents a more thorough and complex approach to understanding the multiple paths by which a person might derive his or her identity *vis-à-vis* the organization. Previous empirical research has suffered from an overly restrictive focus on only one form of identification, thereby artificially constraining our understanding of how identity dynamics unfold in the workplace. The results of this study move the research stream forward by demonstrating the viability and utility of the expanded model. Specifically, this study developed and assessed measures of the dimensions of this expanded model of identification and provided initial evidence of the model's criterion-related validity. Results for the Research Question showed that the four cells in the model are *related* (moderate to strong correlations among all four factors) yet *discrete* (four dimensions demonstrated in the confirmatory factor analysis). Surprisingly, however, identification was negatively correlated with ambivalent and neutral identification whereas disidentification was positively correlated with these variables. An examination of the antecedents associated with the expanded model will provide some suggestive ideas on why this occurred.

Hence, this exploratory study has demonstrated that the expanded model shows promise toward providing a more complete picture of a person's identity as derived from the employing organization.

Antecedents associated with the expanded model

According to the strictest regression analysis (where each form of identification was regressed on the antecedents after controlling for the other three forms of identification), identification was positively associated—as hypothesized—with the need to identify (NOID) and positive affectivity (at $p \leq 0.10$), but not with organizational reputation and OI strength. Although not hypothesized, identification was negatively associated with cynicism (but only in the less strict regression analysis where the other forms of identification were not controlled for). NOID was easily the strongest antecedent ($\beta = 0.35$), suggesting that individuals may identify because—in a real sense—they must. Moreover, positive affectivity and low cynicism may signal a willingness to believe the best of one's employer.

As hypothesized, disidentification was negatively associated with organizational reputation and NOID (less strict analysis), and positively associated with negative affectivity, cynicism (less strict analysis), and psychological contract breach. Although not hypothesized, disidentification was also positively associated with intrarole conflict and OI incongruence (less strict analysis). Organizational reputation, which was framed in positive terms, had the strongest association ($\beta = -0.27$), suggesting that either a positive reputation may inoculate one against disidentification or that a negative reputation may precipitate disidentification. A negative reputation, as well as psychological contract breach and intrarole conflict, may cause individuals to distance themselves psychologically from a context perceived as aversive. Individual predispositions also play a role: contrary to identification, disidentification was negatively related to NOID and positively related to negative affectivity and cynicism, suggesting an *un*willingness to believe in one's employer.

As predicted, ambivalent identification was positively associated with OI incongruence and intrarole conflict. Although not hypothesized, ambivalent identification was also positively associated with negative affectivity (less strict analysis) and negatively associated with psychological contract breach. We were surprised that the profile of positive and negative antecedents associated with ambivalent identification is more similar to the profile for disidentification than for identification, given that ambivalence is a meld of both identification and disidentification (see Figure 1). Though similar, the profile for an employee experiencing ambivalent identification does differ from that for one experiencing disidentification—organizational reputation and NOID were not associated with ambivalence.

The similarity between the profiles of antecedents for ambivalent identification and disidentification suggests a reason for the positive correlation between ambivalent identification and disidentification (vs. the negative correlation between ambivalent identification and identification). Given normative expectations that employees will identify with their employers (Ashforth, 2001), perhaps ambivalence depends on the active push of the antecedents noted above, and perhaps the experience of ambivalence suggests to the individual that he or she is not the prototypical or exemplary member expected by the organization. If identification is the expected state, then experiencing ambivalence may indicate momentum toward possible disidentification. Thus, ambivalence may be a precursor for full-blown disidentification, a possible way station on the slippery slope toward antipathy. If so, then the impact of ambivalence on the individual and organization may be more pernicious than conceptual treatments of the expanded model generally recognize.

Neutral identification was positively associated with individualism, as hypothesized, but not OI strength. Further, although not hypothesized, neutral identification was negatively associated with NOID (less strict analysis) and positive affectivity. Given that neutral identification was not significantly associated with the organizational or job-related antecedents, it appears that neutrality is more a reflection of the individual than the situation. Perhaps because identification is normatively expected in organizations, neutral identification—like ambivalent identification—may require the active push of certain antecedents, in this case individualism (and possibly a low need for identification and low positive affectivity). On one hand, then, it would appear that individuals scoring high on neutral identification can be characterized as loners rather than as somehow disaffected or alienated from the organization. On the other hand, the strong positive association between neutral identification and disidentification ($r = 0.60$, $\beta = 0.38$), compared to the strong negative association between neutrality and identification ($r = -0.64$, $\beta = -0.37$), suggests that neutral identification may not be quite so 'neutral' after all. Clearly, future research is needed to sort out the phenomenology of neutral identification.

Hence, the pattern of findings demonstrates the discriminability of the four forms of identification, both in their operationalization and in their sets of organizational, job-related, and individual difference antecedents. An interesting issue for future research, presaged by the discussion above, is the possible progressions over time among the four forms. The associations between the forms and the

set of organizational and job-related antecedents suggest that one's attachment to the organization may vary over time in response to situational changes. For example, identification may veer into ambivalence and even disidentification if one encounters intrarole conflict or one's psychological contract is violated. At the same time, given the somewhat unique pattern of individual difference variables associated with each form of identification, individuals are likely predisposed to particular forms, suggesting a certain stability in their attachment to the organization over time and a counterweight to situational changes. For example, a person with a high NOID may persist in identifying with his or her organization despite its poor reputation.

Relative magnitude of the four forms of identification

Given the relatively high mean organizational tenure of the sample (8.8 years), it seems reasonable that individuals who disidentified with the organization or who, to a lesser extent, were neutral, would be more likely to have left the organization—whether voluntarily or involuntarily—than those who identified with it or were at least ambivalent. It follows therefore that the mean for identification would be significantly greater than the mean for ambivalent identification (3.52 vs. 2.43, $t = 14.55$, $p \leq 0.01$), which would in turn be greater than the mean for neutral identification (2.43 vs. 1.82, $t = 12.46$, $p \leq 0.01$), which would be greater than the mean for disidentification (1.82 vs. 1.72, $t = 2.66$, $p \leq 0.01$).[5] It is also noteworthy that the mean for ambivalent identification is not too far from the midpoint of the response scale (2.43 vs. 3), suggesting that ambivalence is not a rare existential experience in organizational contexts and providing evidence that it warrants further study (Ashforth, 2001; Elsbach, 2001; Pratt, 2000; Pratt & Doucet, 2000). The results also imply that people *can* disidentify with their employing organization while *remaining* in it over the long term. This suggests that employee disidentification within the organization, since it does not necessarily lead to turnover, is a phenomenon managers will encounter and should be acknowledged and studied further.

Practical implications

Not surprisingly, most discussions of the practical implications of research on organizational identification focus only on one cell of Figure 1, that of identification. Given that identification tends to be associated with positive outcomes for the individual and organization (with the proviso that there may be a dark side to 'overidentification'), and given that identification in the present study was negatively associated not only with disidentification but with ambivalent and neutral identification, managers should be wary of the other three cells of Figure 1. Our results suggest that, at the organizational level, a positive reputation can forestall disidentification and possibly ambivalent identification, and an internally congruent organizational identity can forestall ambivalence and possibly neutrality. A positive reputation and an internally consistent OI can be realized simultaneously through a meld of *substantive management* (material change in organizational practices) and *symbolic management* (the ways in which the organization is portrayed) (Pfeffer, 1981). Examples of the latter include developing a clear mission statement, relating stories and myths that embody and edify the OI, crafting traditions and rituals that honor the organization's history and OI, and championing individuals who exemplify the OI; examples of the former include using the core values and beliefs in the mission statement as an active guide for decision making and practices, emphasizing product quality, institutionalizing high

[5]It should be noted that because the individual items are not identical across the four scales, this comparison of the overall scale scores is only suggestive of mean differences.

involvement practices, and demonstrating a concern for employees and stakeholders (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Elsbach & Glynn, 1996).

Our results also suggest that, at the job-related level, psychological contract breaches can foster disidentification and possibly ambivalent identification, and intrarole conflicts can foster ambivalence and possibly disidentification. Consistent with the above organizational practices, managers can reduce psychological contract breaches and intrarole conflicts by establishing clear and consistent role and psychological contract expectations, providing ongoing guidance for resolving emergent conflicts, establishing communication and feedback mechanisms for monitoring conformance with those expectations, and providing swift remedial action if breaches should occur (Rousseau, 1995).

Limitations and future research

Some limitations should be borne in mind when interpreting the results. First, given Reade's (2001) point, quoted earlier, that there is not an established model of the antecedents of organizational identification (let alone the other three cells of Figure 1), our model is necessarily exploratory. Second, the study relied on cross-sectional and self-report data, thus raising concerns about causality and common method variance. Third, there may be feedback loops between the presumed identification outcomes and antecedents that are not captured in this design. For example, identification may bias one's perceptions of the organization's reputation.

Accordingly, it should be remembered that the intent of this exploratory study was to provide an initial investigation of promising constructs related to the expanded model, not to establish definitive and exhaustive causal relationships. And, as Spector (1994, p. 390) notes, cross-sectional, self-report results can be appropriate to provide a useful 'first step in studying phenomena of interest.' Clearly, however, future longitudinal research is needed to more firmly establish causality. Regarding common method variance, it should be remembered that (1) the focus of identification theory is on an individual's *perceptions* (individuals respond to the reality they see or socially construct), and (2) the unique pattern of antecedents associated with each of the four dimensions of the expanded model of identification suggests that far more is going on than just method variance. Nonetheless, future research should include multimethods (e.g., supervisory ratings, archival data), particularly for the organizational and job-related variables.

Where do we go from here? Clearly, more research is required on the psychometric properties of our new measures of disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification. In particular, it would be useful to ascertain their test–retest reliabilities, convergent and discriminant validities *vis-à-vis* related measures (such as Bergami & Bagozzi's, 2000, measure of identification), predictive validities *vis-à-vis* potential outcomes (discussed below), and their applicability to multiple foci of identification (such as teams, departments, and occupations). It would also be useful to determine if the four forms cluster in discrete ways across individuals to create 'identification profiles.'

Beyond the psychometrics, we believe there is both a conceptual and empirical integrity to the expanded model of identification. We see particular power in the constructs of ambivalent identification and disidentification, which both warrant extensive further study. And we are encouraged by empirical work already pursuing the dynamics of ambivalence (Pratt, 2000, for example) and disidentification (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001, for example) and demonstrating their importance in understanding organizational behavior. The evidence is not so clear, however, regarding neutral identification. Although we argued that neutrality is more than the absence of identification and disidentification, it is more difficult to make the case that neutrality, in and of itself, leads to specific workplace behaviors. This is clearly a question for future research to examine and clarify.

Also, whereas the present study focused on potential antecedents associated with the expanded model of identification, we anticipate that a major pay-off of the model will be the documentation of subsequent *outcomes*. Preliminary research and theorizing by Dukerich et al. (1998), Elsbach (1999), Pratt (2000), Ashforth (2001), and Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) suggest that the four dimensions of the model may predict a host of cognitive, affective, and behavioral outcomes, ranging from satisfaction to intentions to quit, and from organizational citizenship behaviors to whistle-blowing. Given this study's evidence toward the expanded model of identification, we believe that the model has immense potential to shed light on a diverse array of organizational phenomena.

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Appendix: Measures Developed for the Study

Organization identity strength

1. There is a common sense of purpose in this organization
2. This organization has a clear and unique vision
3. There is a strong feeling of unity in this organization
4. This organization has a specific mission shared by its employees

Organization identity incongruence

1. My organization stands for contradictory things
2. The values of my organization are not compatible with each other
3. The mission, goals, and values of my organization are all well aligned (R)
4. My organization sends mixed messages concerning what it cares about
5. The goals of my organization are often in conflict
6. The major beliefs of my organization are inconsistent

Need for organizational identification

1. Without an organization to work for, I would feel incomplete
2. I'd like to work in an organization where I would think of *its* successes and failures as being *my* successes and failures
3. An important part of who I am would be missing if I didn't belong to a work organization
4. Generally, I do not feel a need to identify with an organization that I am working for (R)
5. Generally, the more my goals, values, and beliefs overlap with those of my employer, the happier I am
6. I would rather say 'we' than 'they' when talking about an organization that I work for
7. No matter where I work, I'd like to think of myself as representing what the organization stands for

Ambivalent identification

1. I have mixed feelings about my affiliation with this organization
2. I'm torn between loving and hating this organization
3. I feel conflicted about being part of this organization
4. I have contradictory feelings about this organization
5. I find myself being both proud and embarrassed to belong to this organization
6. I have felt both honor and disgrace by being a member of this organization

Neutral identification

1. It really doesn't matter to me what happens to this organization
2. I don't have many feelings about this organization at all
3. I give little thought to the concerns of this organization
4. I'm pretty neutral toward the success or failure of this organization

5. This organization doesn't have much personal meaning to me
6. I don't concern myself much with this organization's problems

Disidentification

1. I am embarrassed to be part of this organization
2. This organization does shameful things
3. I have tried to keep the organization I work for a secret from people I meet
4. I find this organization to be disgraceful
5. I want people to know that I disagree with how this organization behaves
6. I have been ashamed of what goes on in this organization

Identification (from Mael & Ashforth, 1992)

1. When someone criticizes my organization, it feels like a personal insult
2. I am very interested in what others think about my organization
3. When I talk about this organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'
4. This organization's successes are my successes
5. When someone praises this organization it feels like a personal compliment
6. If a story in the media criticized this organization, I would feel embarrassed