The Role of Organizational Identification in Post-death Organizing

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THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION IN POST-DEATH ORGANIZING

A Dissertation

by

Ian Jude Walsh

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Management

March 23, 2009
DEDICATION

To my family.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION ENDURANCE IN POST-DEATH ORGANIZING

Ian J. Walsh
Dissertation Chair: Jean M. Bartunek

ABSTRACT

Whereas some organizations effectively vanish when they die, others have robust legacies grounded in ongoing, post-death organizing that preserves valued organizational elements after an organization dies. Through post-death organizing, former members perpetuate an organization’s legacy, or a shared understanding of its historical contributions. Post-death organizing may be best understood as an expression of the endurance of former members’ identification with a defunct organization. This dissertation develops and tests a model of the role of organizational identification endurance in members’ propensity to participate in post-death organizing and the consequent effects on organizational identity. The model identified the cognitive, evaluative, and affective processes underlying organizational identification and its individual and situational antecedents.

Data for this study were drawn from a survey of 2,192 former employees of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) in 28 countries around the world. The analysis of these data was conducted using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling procedures. The resulting model demonstrated strong fit with the data according to several goodness-of-fit indices. The model provides support for a positive relationship between organizational identification endurance and four antecedent factors, including need for organizational identification, positive affectivity, length of service, and perceived relational organizational identity orientation. As expected, organizational
identification endurance was positively related to participation in post-death organizing and perceived strength of a defunct organization’s identity. Participation in post-death organizing was also positively related with perceived organizational identity strength.

Contrary to expectations, the extent to which individuals’ employment coincided with years of growth was negatively related to the endurance of organizational identification. Further investigation of this relationship through post-hoc analyses provided inconclusive support for a relationship in either direction between these variables.

This research on post-death organizing elaborates scholarly and managerial understanding about former organizational members’ motives for participating in post-death organizing. Rather than simply moving to new organizational settings, individuals who are strongly identified with their defunct organizations will be drawn towards opportunities to preserve the organizational characteristics on which their identification is based. This research also has important implications for identification research. This research sheds light on the processes that enable the endurance of organizational identification, which may be more long lasting than the organizations from which it is derived. This research elaborates theories of identification by illuminating the intertwined effects of cognition, evaluation and affect on identification and its implications for individuals’ behavior during and after experiences of organizational death.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

“Once a DEC employee, always a DEC employee. I still have both of my DEC badges and display them hanging off my PC with pride. Eighteen years at DEC was not enough!!”

In June 1998, Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) finalized an acquisition agreement with Compaq Computer Corporation. Within a few years, a series of organizational restructurings and a subsequent merger with the Hewlett-Packard Company left little doubt that DEC had “died” (Earls, 2004; Schein, 2003). Despite its organizational death, DEC has maintained a vibrant and enduring legacy through the concerted action of former organizational members. Former employees operate 26 alumni associations in 17 countries that serve to maintain connections through networking events, newsletters and online message boards. Others search for DEC products, documentation, records and memorabilia to contribute to permanent exhibits of DEC artifacts at the Computer History Museum and virtual DEC museums. Former organizational members have also created spinoff businesses to sell DEC-related products and services, including software applications and repair services for installed DEC systems. These examples represent instances of what I term “post-death organizing,” which I define as collective efforts by former organizational members to sustain valued organizational elements after an organizational death.

Whereas some organizations effectively vanish when they die, others, such as DEC, have robust legacies grounded in ongoing, post-death organizing. Through post-death organizing, former members collectively sustain valued organizational elements that become widely recognized as the basis for an organization’s legacy, which may be
defined as shared understandings of an organization’s most historic contributions (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008). This dissertation answers three primary research questions. First, why do former members of defunct organizations participate in post-death organizing? Prior research on organizational death (e.g. Duckles, Galaskiewicz & Hager, 2005; Sutton, 1987) generally assumes that former members conclude their involvement in organizational life when their organizations are formally closed. However, as the example of DEC shows, many former members remain intensely involved in new cycles of organizing that are explicitly tied to their prior organizations.

Second, why do participants in post-death organizing continue to identify with their defunct organizations? As the introductory quote suggests, these organizations fill a prominent role in the social identities of those who are involved in post-death organizing. This dissertation examines the role of the endurance of organizational identification in members’ propensity to participate in post-death organizing. Individuals develop their social identities through their participation in social groups and work organizations (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel, 1978), which may not outlast members’ identification with them. Identification research (e.g. Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994; Fiol, 2002; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Pratt, 2000) has traditionally examined patterns of identification within an intact organizational context, tacitly assuming that identification tracks with organizational membership. However, Rousseau (1998) suggested that identification may demonstrate substantial durability when situational cues are no longer present, such as following job loss or organizational death. In this dissertation, I create a finer-grained view of organizational identification that is grounded
in the cognitive, evaluative, and affective processes that produce it to explain individuals’ enduring identification with organizations in which they are no longer active members.

Third, why do former members of defunct organizations continue to hold strong perceptions of organizational identity about an entity that no longer exists? Organizational identity strength has been traditionally studied in the context of “living” organizations (e.g. Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). As an evolving experience of organizational change (Isabella, 1990), organizational death creates conditions that trigger a collective sense of identity ambiguity, leading members to eventually coalesce around a revised understanding of an organization’s identity (Corley & Gioia, 2004). In the context of organizational death, those new incarnations of organizational identity are cocreated in the absence, not the presence, of the organizations to which they are ascribed. These shared understandings of a defunct organization’s central and distinctive character emerge from retrospective reflections of a shared past and may be best understood as “legacy organizational identities” (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Walsh & Glynn, 2008). In this dissertation, I examine the influence of the endurance of former members’ organizational identification and participation in post-death organizing on the perceived strength of an organization’s legacy identity.

The purpose of my dissertation is to develop and test a relatively parsimonious model of the influence of organizational identification endurance on individuals’ propensity to participate in post-death organizing. I examine how enduring organizational identification serves as an individual-level mechanism that produces the social and behavioral patterns that sustain post-death organizing over time. I also identify individual traits and situational factors as antecedents of organizational identification that
may explain its endurance after an organization dies. Finally, I also examine the effects of organizational identification endurance and participation in post-death organizing on a defunct organization’s “legacy” identity.

The endurance of organizational identification may provide an explanation of why individuals participate in post-death organizing, but why should scholars and practitioners concern themselves with this phenomenon and individuals’ participation in it? While post-death organizing has not been studied by organizational researchers, evidence from the popular press and internet databases suggest that it is occurring on an increasingly frequent basis. In the summer of 2008, the Yahoo! Groups directory included 491 alumni associations for former employees that were formed after their organizations had died.¹ These organizations provide participants an opportunity to sustain their relationships with other organizational members. Between 2000 and 2007, the number of such alumni groups increased at an average annual rate of 51.1%. An increasingly large number of organizations are facing death each year; for instance, the number of American firms initiating liquidation plans through Chapter 7 bankruptcy proceedings increased by 58% in 2007 (www.uscourts.gov; accessed 6/29/08). In the face of rising rates of organizational death and the current worldwide economic crisis, the number of instances of post-death organizing may be expected to continue to increase over time.

From a scholarly perspective, post-death organizing also represents an important phenomenon. It signals what individuals deem important about a dead organization and

¹ While corporate alumni groups are also registered with other web-based services (e.g. Google Groups, LinkedIn, corporatealumni.com), only Yahoo! Groups provided a searchable directory that included the dates these groups were formed. I excluded any groups that were formed while an organization was an intact entity.
thus preserves its “cultural heritage” (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Preservation of cultural heritage has been recognized as an implicitly important goal in a variety of research domains, including history (Rosenzweig, 2003), sociology (Sztompka, 1994), linguistics (Muhlhausler, 1992; Peyton, Ranard & McGinnis, 2001), archaeology (McManamon, 1991), and anthropology (Clark et al., 2001; Olwig, 1999). Organizational research has started to examine the distinctiveness of managerial (Hatch, Kostera & Kozminski, 2005) and organizational (e.g. Kunda, 1992; Schein, 1985; Martin, 1992) cultures. While this dissertation does not purport to directly examine or articulate an organization’s cultural history, it does provide scholars and practitioners a means to understand the dynamics of post-death organizing that retains and sustains an organization’s past. A greater recognition of why individuals participate in post-death organizing may enable more productive or functional efforts to sustain valued elements of organizational life, thus providing scholars and practitioners access to the cultural traditions of dead organizations, which may otherwise be lost and can inform future research and management practice.

This dissertation will resolve an apparent paradox underlying the relationship between organizational identification and post-death organizing. When individuals participate in post-death organizing, they preserve situational cues that were most closely associated with their bases of identification. For instance, former organizational members may create alumni associations to keep intact their relationships with their co-workers, whose relationships served as a primary basis for their initial identification with their organizations (Carador & Pratt, 2006). If organizational identification does not depend on situational cues (Rousseau, 1998), why do individuals engage in concerted
efforts to preserve them? Episodes of organizational death yield a series of motives for individuals who remain strongly identified to participate in post-death organizing. In this dissertation, I develop a finer-grained understanding of organizational identification endurance that makes clear these motives for post-death organizing and furthers scholarly understanding of the connections between identification and individual behavior.

In the following chapters, I present and review the research through which I examined the two research questions underlying this dissertation. Chapter 2 provides a conceptual overview of post-death organizing and the collective behaviors that comprise and perpetuate it. In Chapter 3, I unpack the components of organizational identification by examining the roles of cognition, evaluation and affect in individuals’ social identities. In Chapter 4, I propose a model of organizational identification that explains individuals’ participation in post-death organizing, including antecedents and moderators of the relationships in the model, and the effects on organizational identity. Chapter 5 provides a review of my research method, including a review of my research sites and my procedures for data collection and analysis. After presenting the results of this study in Chapter 6, I discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and suggest areas for future research in Chapter 7.
CHAPTER 2

POST-DEATH ORGANIZING

In this chapter, I describe the phenomenon of post-death organizing to provide a conceptual basis for the study. To review, post-death organizing may be understood as ongoing organizing that sustains valued organizational elements following an episode of organizational death. The definition points to three essential characteristics of this phenomenon. First, post-death organizing emerges within the immediate context of organizational death. Second, it preserves valued organizational elements. Finally, it involves new cycles of organizing that create and maintain the new organizations through which former members enact this preservation. In this section, I examine each of these defining characteristics to build a conceptual understanding of what constitutes post-death organizing to distinguish it from other organizational phenomena. I also identify the actions taken by would-be preservers that ultimately yield and perpetuate post-death organizing and the effects on a defunct organization’s identity.

Organizational Death

Post-death organizing emerges in the immediate context of organizational death. Researchers have defined organizational death in different ways. Most of the organizational death literature has examined instances of legal death, such as those situations where organizations go out of business or otherwise officially shut down (e.g. Duckles, Hager & Galaskiewicz, 2005; Freeman, Carroll & Hannan, 1983; Shepherd, 2003; Sutton, 1987). Taking a social constructionist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) on organizational death, Sutton (1987:543) wrote that death occurs when “former participants agree that the organization is defunct, and the set of activities comprised by
the dying organization are no longer accomplished intact.” This definition incorporates a broader range of organizational deaths, including those that occur when an acquired organization is dissolved within a parent organization following a merger (Carroll & Delacroix, 1982). For the purposes of this dissertation, I will adhere to this socially constructed definition and consider an organization to be dead when its former participants no longer construe it as an intact unit. Post-death organizing occurs in situations where individuals perceive death even if an organization continues to exist as some legal, but unrecognizable, entity.

More than simply an event, organizational death represents a broader environmental context for individual action and interpretation. Individuals often become aware of a possible death before any official announcement through shared rumors or involvement in turnaround efforts (Sutton, 1987). Death does not occur instantaneously and represents an episode of organizational change (Isabella, 1990) that may transpire over many months or even years (e.g. Cameron & Lavine, 2006). Organizational members routinely make sense of death and take related actions well before it actually happens, and in cases of post-death organizing, in its wake. For instance, Hoetker and Agarwal (2007) studied the efforts of former employees to spread innovations from their defunct organizations in new work environments.

Post-death organizing emerges as an outcome of collective experiences of organizational death. It thus has a temporal relationship with death; it specifically emerges where members interpret that death has occurred. This definition excludes preservation-oriented behavior that occurs outside the context of death. Organizations may engage in preservation efforts while they are active and thriving (e.g. Armour, 2005;
Casey, 2004). For instance, Danilov (1991) catalogued the efforts of more than 300 firms, including AT&T, Siemens AG, and Wells Fargo, to archive historically significant corporate materials in self-maintained museum collections. Nostalgic revivals or preservation of long dead organizations by outsiders, such as the creation of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, also do not constitute post-death organizing. These efforts lack a direct connection to the context of organizational death and likely unfold in different ways and occur for different reasons.

Valued Organizational Elements

Post-death organizing preserves valued organizational elements that would otherwise disappear following death. As death transpires, individuals often search for ways to maintain access to sources of personal value in their organizations (cf. Meyer & Zucker, 1989). My initial examination of instances of post-death organizing in the popular press and internet databases brought into focus three organizational elements that are frequently preserved by former members of defunct organizations: relationships, artifacts, and roles. I now review each of these organizational elements and the organizational forms that former members employ to preserve them.

Relationships  First, individuals often seek to preserve their organizational relationships, or interpersonal connections with other organizational members. The organizational death literature has identified the importance of relationships to departing organizational members. As individuals execute closing processes of dying organizations, they engage in reconnecting activities with former co-workers that revitalize their relationships (Sutton, 1987). Individuals also plan parting ceremonies to celebrate these relationships with other organizational members (Harris & Sutton, 1986).
To preserve these relationships after death occurs, former members create organizations that facilitate ongoing interaction with their workplace colleagues, such as alumni associations and online forums. Whereas alumni groups are traditionally associated with graduates of educational institutions, they can also serve as an opportunity for former members of work organizations to formally continue the relationships that they built in their workplaces. More than casual reunions or social gatherings, alumni associations are managed on an ongoing basis by members with official leadership roles and require sources of revenue, such as membership dues or paid advertisements in alumni publications, to maintain their operations.

**Artifacts** Second, former organizational members may preserve “defining artifacts” (Cappetta & Gioia, 2006: 210), which are “those products so closely associated with the identity of a company that they affect the way that all perceivers make sense of the firm.” Organizations intentionally use defining artifacts to communicate an organizational identity to both insiders and outsiders (Cappetta & Gioia, 2006; Schultz, Hatch & Ciccolella, 2006) and quickly dispose of those that have been delegitimized (Glynn & Marquis, 2004). Whereas artifacts have been characterized as a surface-level manifestation of an organization’s culture (Schein, 1985), they serve as carriers for deeply held, collective understandings of an organization’s legacy (Walsh & Glynn, 2008).

Members of defunct organizations may seek to preserve different types of artifacts. Vilnai-Yavetz and Rafaeli (2006) differentiated physical artifacts, including real estate (Gagliardi, 1990), equipment, products and branded organizational materials, from intangible artifacts, such as linguistic patterns (Cunliffe & Shotter, 2006), names
(Glynn & Marquis, 2006), management practices, intellectual property or craft
techniques. As death transpires, intangible artifacts are often preserved in published
documents or organizational records that make them accessible to interested individuals.
For instance, Schein’s (2003) work made explicit DEC’s management philosophy, which
has long been considered a defining artifact of its work environment.

Corporate museums, which commemorate an organization’s history (Casey,
2004), are frequently created to preserve organizational artifacts. For instance, the
Studebaker National Museum in South Bend, Indiana, which houses a vast collection of
the defunct automotive manufacturer’s products and records, aims “to keep the flame of
the Studebaker tradition alive and burning for generations to come…through the display,
interpretation, conservation and preservation of Studebaker vehicles, archives and other
objects to enrich present and future generations” (www.studebakermuseum.org; accessed
11/6/08). These museums may be independent organizations operated by non-profit
groups or universities, or permanent exhibits within larger units with a compatible focus,
such as an industry-specific museum.

Roles  Third, former organizational members may seek to preserve their roles, or
work positions within an organization’s structure. Ashforth (2001) wrote that a role exit
experience may culminate in the creation of an exrole, which Ebaugh (1988: 149)
equated to a “‘hangover identity’ of a previous role.” Exroles enable retention of role
aspects that individuals value and may involve the reconstruction of a role as an exrole
with active duties (Ashforth, 2001). In many cases, these exroles become full time
endeavors for former employees of defunct organizations. When organizational death
threatens opportunities for role expression, organizational members may seek opportunities to create active exroles outside of their dying organizations.

Individuals who seek to preserve organizational roles may do so by creating spinoff organizations, or commercial ventures in which they perform tasks related to their work in a dead organization. For instance, a product engineer of a dead technology company may create a business to provide maintenance or repair services for products that are still being used at former customer sites. Stack (1992) wrote about the experience of a group of International Harvester employees, who joined forces to form Springfield Remanufacturing Company in order to save their jobs amidst their organization’s death. Whereas intact companies may intentionally create spinoff organizations for strategic purposes (Corley & Gioia, 2004), spinoffs are also commonly started by subsets of individuals who are no longer able to perform their roles in an organization (cf. Dyck & Starke, 1999). These newly-formed entities may resume production of popular product lines or provide related services, such as repair and maintenance support for discontinued products.

**Ongoing Organizing**

Post-death organizing depends on the ongoing involvement of its participants; like any organizing effort, it ends if or when members collectively withdraw their effort. It thus adheres to Weick’s (1979; 1993) criteria for organizing, which can be illustrated with the example of a corporate alumni association. First, post-death organizing requires interlocking routines, or routinized patterns of action that involve groups of people engaging in specific activities on a regular basis. Post-death organizing is fundamentally collective; it requires more than an individual’s personal memory of organizational life or
collection of memorabilia. Alumni groups have explicit expectations about the frequency and nature of members’ participation in group activities. For instance, individuals may be expected to attend committee meetings on a periodic basis, produce written material for alumni newsletters and regularly participate in social gatherings.

Second, post-death organizing minimally meets Mintzberg’s (1983) criteria for a simple organizational structure, which generally involves an organic configuration and minimal hierarchy. Unlike college alumni clubs, which are generally managed within a college’s bureaucratic structure, corporate alumni associations of dead organizations are generally organized as independent associations by former members, who are charged with managerial roles.

Third, post-death organizing produces a shared understanding of rules and roles that enables interchange of individuals with minimal disruption. Unlike a casual gathering of former co-workers, activities of corporate alumni associations continue as individuals move in and out of assigned roles, such as officer positions or newsletter editors. Finally, post-death organizing is ongoing. Discrete events, such as parting ceremonies (Harris & Sutton, 1986) or occasional reunions, alone do not constitute post-death organizing, since the effort to produce them is short-term and temporally bounded in nature.

Preservers’ Actions

Through a previous qualitative research study (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008), I found that post-death organizing depends upon the concerted efforts of an interested band of organizational members, who engage in a distinct series of actions. Figure 1 illustrates a process model of how post-death organizing emerges and unfolds following an episode of
organizational death. This model illuminates three types of collective action taken by participants in post-death organizing to sustain valued elements of organizational life. These efforts are primarily achieved through the creation of “successor organizations,” which are newly formed entities that enable the ongoing preservation and promotion of a defunct organization’s valued elements. These successor organizations become widely recognized as the guardians of a dead organization’s legacy identity. In order to explain the collective action underlying post-death organizing, I will now briefly summarize that model.

**Figure 1: A Process Model of Post-death Organizing**


In this model, organizational members begin to construe their organizations as *defunct* entities as senior executives take actions to close their organizations, such as the completion of acquisitions or the shuttering of factories. As members leave their dead organizations, they primarily experience highly *unpleasant and activated emotions*, such
as anger. These interpretations and feelings prompt some members to engage in *recovery activities*, or efforts to save specific elements of organizational life on which they place great value and that would otherwise disappear. Recovery activities involve solicitation and negotiation with individuals who control resources that members seek to preserve. For instance, two DEC employees negotiated an agreement with DEC’s acquirer to purchase the rights to a patented technology, which would come to serve as the basis for a product line at a spinoff company.

When recovery activities succeed, members gain ongoing access to specific organizational elements they sought to preserve. This success creates a new sense of a *renewal* of organizational life. While the defunct organizations do not legally reopen, members collectively understand their efforts as producing a “new chapter” or “renaissance” of organization life. In this stage, members primarily demonstrate pleasant and activated emotions, including excitement and happiness. These new interpretations and feelings prompt members to engage in *reorganizing activities*, or efforts to create new organizations that would preserve recovered organizational elements over time. Through reorganizing activities, involved members establish formal rules and roles by which they will govern the successor organizations.

As these new ventures take shape, members start to recognize them as *performing* organizations in their own right. The success of members’ reorganizing activities produces primarily pleasant and inactive emotions, and members regularly express feeling of contentedness with organizational life. Realizing that their preservation campaigns would require continued effort, participants in successor organizations engage in *sustenance activities*, or tasks that ensure the future of their new organizations. They
solicit support from others, including former organizational members and interested outsiders. Sustenance activities also include efforts to ensure the future solvency of the successor organizations through attempts to build revenue streams.

Whether they are in support of the preservation of relationships, artifacts or roles, sustenance activities demonstrate certain common characteristics. They provide former members an opportunity to reminisce about their past experiences. For instance, stories about events from organizational life are shared by attendees at alumni gatherings and compiled by writers of corporate histories. Sustenance activities celebrate dead organizations and individuals’ membership in them. Corporate museums frequently host special events to commemorate anniversaries of organizational events and to honor former members. Finally, these activities keep valued elements intact for the future. For example, creators of spinoff companies frequently resuscitate and perpetuate revered product lines or offer services related to their dead organization’s prior work.

In this research, I will specifically focus on the individuals’ propensity to participate in sustenance activities. I have narrowed my focus in this way for two reasons. First, whereas recovery and reorganizing activities are typically short-term, sustenance activities provide the generative, collective energy on which post-death organizing depends over an extended and indefinite period of time. Sustenance activities are the primary tasks of post-death organizing, which effectively ends if sustenance activities are suspended. For instance, a corporate alumni association will only exist as long as alumni keep it intact through service in officer roles and participation in group activities. Second, recovery and reorganizing activities do not always succeed in producing functional outcomes. Some groups of former members may be unsuccessful in
their recovery efforts, and initially vibrant campaigns to reorganize may peter out after an initial burst of interest. Post-death organizing is ultimately successful at preserving valued organizational elements when former members successfully launch and steward sustenance activities.

Effects of Sustenance Activities

Through their successor organizations, participants in post-death organizing enable the preservation of valued organizational elements, such as organizational relationships, artifacts and roles. These efforts maintain a collective and public focus on the central and distinctive organizational characteristics that underlie its organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985). When an organization no longer exists, members’ shared understandings of its identity shift from emphasizing “who we are as an organization” (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Corley & Goioa, 2004) to recollections of its past (Czarniawska & Wolff, 1998; Walsh & Glynn, 2008). Whether the contents of an organizational identity are considered constant (Whetten, 2006) or unstable (Gioia, Schultz & Corley, 2000) over time, the socially constructed nature of an organizational identity suggests that it may not necessarily die with an organization. Former members will continue to recognize an organization’s identity as real as long as they continue to enact it (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Participants in post-death organizing regularly interpret their efforts as means of sustaining their organizations’ legacies (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008). These legacies generally involve the same central and distinctive elements that defined an organization’s identity during its lifetime. For instance, Schein (2003) described the legacy of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) in terms of its management philosophy, advancement of
technology, highly capable employees, and intellectual output. When an organization has died, former members’ collective understanding of its organizational identity may be best understood as a legacy organizational identity (Walsh & Glynn, 2008: 262), or “a collective claim by members of a defunct organization to ‘who we were as an organization.’”

Legacy organizational identities vary in terms of their strength and persistence (Walsh & Glynn, 2008). Strength can be understood in terms of the degree to which an identity is “widely shared and deeply held” (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004: 8) by former organizational members. Some defunct organizations have strong legacy identities that allow them to inhere in the collective memory of future generations, while others are relegated to obscurity. Persistence refers to an identity’s historical accuracy, or the degree to which identity elements that were central and distinctive when an organization was “alive” remains salient for former members after an organization has died. A strongly held legacy identity does not demonstrate persistence when it is based on “new memories” (Loftus & Hoffman, 1989) and does not accurately represent how members characterized an organization during its lifetime.

Having explained the dynamics and consequences of post-death organizing, I now develop an explanation of why former organizational members choose to participate in it. In the next chapter, I review the identification literature to develop a broader conceptualization of organizational identification, the processes that underlie its endurance, and the motives it provides for participating in sustenance activities.
CHAPTER 3

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

The organizational identities that members collectively construct and ascribe to their organizations (Albert & Whetten, 1985) provide a basis from which individuals develop and reconfigure their own self-concepts (Dutton et al., 1994). Drawing on Tajfel (1978; Tajfel & Turner; 1985) and Turner’s (1975) development of social identity theory, Ashforth and Mael (1989: 21) argued that individuals’ self-concepts are comprised of both personal identities, which involve idiosyncratic characteristics, and social identities, which are derived from their perceived “belongingness to some human aggregate,” such as the organizations of which they are members. As individuals identify with their organizations, and possibly multiple targets with an organization, they develop their social identities, which represent their knowledge of their “membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978: 63).

The organizational identification literature has examined several processes of identification through which individuals come to define themselves in terms of an organization, including positive-oriented identification that emphasizes shared characteristics (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), negative-oriented disidentification based on differences (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001), intentionally neutral identification, and ambivalent identification with selective organizational characteristics (Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). In this dissertation, I follow this typology and use the term organizational identification to refer to members’ positive-oriented sense of “oneness” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) with an organizational entity.
Organizational and social psychology research has traditionally differentiated individuals’ organizational identification in terms of its strength (e.g. Dutton, et al., 1994; Elsbach, 1999; Fiol, 2002; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Identification strength has been found to influence a range of individual and collective behaviors, including patterns of social interaction (Dutton, et al., 1994), organizational support (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), cooperative behaviors (Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002) and resistance to organizational change (Fiol, 2002). Extant research has generally examined the strength of organizational identification within the context of a given organization. For instance, Pratt (2000) followed the identification experience of employees at Amway, a network marketing firm, showing how managers employed specific sensemaking practices to trigger new patterns of identification among new hires. Other researchers have studied members’ organizational identification in a broad range of contexts, including art museums (Bhattacharya, Rao & Glynn, 1995), the National Rifle Association (Bhattacharya & Elsbach, 2002), a technology firm (Fiol, 2002) and health care systems (Dukerich et al., 2002).

By examining organizational identification within a specific organizational setting, these studies tacitly assumed that identification tracks with active organizational membership. However, Mael and Ashforth’s (1992) study of college alumni suggested that former organizational members may remain strongly identified with an organization after they formally leave it and continue to act in terms of their identification with it. Rousseau (1998) suggested that organizational identification may outlast an organization itself, citing the example of former employees of the defunct airline PeopleExpress, many of whom demonstrated strong identification for many years after the organization closed.
These examples provide some evidence that organizational identification may remain strong in the wake of conditions that terminate organizational membership, such as graduation, job loss or organizational death. Appreciating the nature of an individual’s identification with a defunct organization involves recognition of not only its strength at a moment in time but also the amount of time by which it has “outlived” the organization itself. In the context of post-death organizing, a more appropriate term for measuring and discussing the nature of individuals’ organizational identification may be endurance, which the Random House dictionary defines as “the ability or strength to continue or last, especially despite…adverse conditions” (www.dictionary.com; accessed 3/6/09). This term reflects both the robustness of identification as well as its “survival” beyond formal organizational membership. Subsequent research on organizational identification has not pursued questions about the endurance of organizational identification, thus providing insufficient means to explain why members continue identifying with organizations of which they are no longer active members.

Whereas organizational identification has been traditionally represented as a cognitive construct (cf. Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bhattacharya, et al., 1995; Dutton et al., 1994; Elsbach, 1999; Fiol, 2002), scholars have recently drawn on Tajfel’s (1978) conceptualization of social identity to theorize the roles of evaluative and affective processes in identification (Ashforth, 2001; Harquail, 1998; Herrbach, 2006). Several recent studies in the social psychology literature have found empirical support for affective, evaluative and cognitive dimensions of identification (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Jackson, 2002; Cameron, 2004). An expanded conceptualization of organizational identification that recognizes the role of evaluative and affective processes
underlying it will make clear the broad range of motives for individuals with enduring organizational identification to participate in post-death organizing. Drawing on prior identification and attachment research, I now delineate the cognitive, evaluative and affective processes underlying organizational identification and theorize about the three components of identification I propose that they influence: the centrality of an organization to an individual’s self-concept, the positivity of individuals’ evaluation of an organization and the nature of an individual’s emotional bond with an organization. I also examine how each of these three components contribute to the endurance of organizational identification.

**Central Categorization**

To review, Ashforth and Mael (1989: 21) characterized organizational identification as a perceived “belongingness to some human aggregate.” These perceptions generate from a process of “social categorization of self and others into ingroup and outgroup [that] accentuates the perceived similarity of the target to the relevant ingroup or outgroup prototype” (Hogg & Terry, 2000: 123). Individuals are likely to perceive numerous ingroups within and among their organizations, which are unlikely to be equally central, or important in terms of their psychological meaning or influence on behavior (Cameron, 2004; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi & Ethier, 1995; Hogg & Terry, 2001). As individuals categorize themselves into specific ingroups, they redefine their self-concepts to incorporate identification with these new entities.

As Ashforth and Mael (1989) noted, social identity theory suggests that individuals’ social identities encompass multiple ingroups, such as cultural and demographic categories, social groups or work organizations (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel &
Turner, 1985; Turner, 1975). The relative priority of a given organization within an individual’s social identity and its consequent effects on behavior may change in different circumstances (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006). For instance, college students may identify with organizations where they work during summer breaks while their identification with their undergraduate institutions likely becomes more central when their academic schedules resume.

In some cases, identification with a given organization remains routinely accessible because it is more valued or considered more important than others (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Johnson et al., 2006). Identification may be most likely to endure over time when it involves a consistently central categorization of self as a member of an organizational ingroup. The endurance of organizational identification suggests that it remains represented and salient within an individual’s self concept on an indefinite basis. Identification thus endures when it routinely occupies an outsized share of an individual’s social identity over time and in different contexts. In such cases, individuals may be most likely to incorporate characteristics of their organizations into their own self-concepts (Rousseau, 1998; Meyer, Becker & van Dick, 2006) “such that being an organization member becomes an integral and chronically accessible part of one’s self-definition” (Riketta et al., 2006: 91). When identification is peripheral or less rooted within an individual’s social identity, it would likely fade in the absence of situational cues or in situations that may make other categorizations salient (Rousseau, 1998).

Positive Evaluation

Organizational research has differentiated the processes by which individuals identify according to the “value significance” (Tajfel, 1978) accorded to group
membership. Individuals evaluate their relationships to organizations in positive, negative, neutral or ambivalent terms (Elsbach, 1999). These evaluations are formed through a process of social comparison, by which individuals assess the merit of their membership in a given group relative to relevant outgroups (Festinger, 1954; Tajfel, 1978). Individuals generally seek to confirm or establish ingroup-favoring evaluations in order to satisfy their underlying self-esteem needs (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Turner, 1975). However, identification with an organization may be central and still be evaluated negatively, such as when corporate scandals produce embarrassment or shame for an organization’s members (Dutton et al., 1994).

Identification may be particularly likely to endure over time when it involves an exceptionally positive evaluation of an organization. For example, Rousseau (1998) cited the example of some United Parcel Service employees who claim to “bleed brown,” thus symbolically internalizing the organization’s core color as a personal characteristic. By incorporating characteristics of their organizations into their own self-concepts, individuals with enduring organizational identification realize positive psychological outcomes, including self-esteem, security and belongingness (Pratt, 1998; Rousseau, 1998; Riketta et al., 2006).

Secure Emotional Attachment

Several social psychology studies have recently found evidence of a distinguishable affective dimension of identification (Cameron, 2004; Ellemers et al., 1999; Jackson, 2002). Ellemers, Kortekaas and Ouwerkerk (1999) characterized the affective dimension of identification as the degree to which individuals desired to remain as members of a specific group. Other studies have focused on the nature of the
“affective ties,” or emotional closeness, with other group members (Jackson, 2002) or an organization itself (Cameron, 2004), both of which are common targets of identification (Johnson et al., 2006). Though these studies have characterized this dimension in different ways, taken together, this research provides a means to understand the role of affect in organizational identification. These affective ties reflect an emotional attachment, or common and durable affective bond of the self with others (Cameron & Lalonde, 2001). While the concepts of identification and attachment have been both equated (Ashforth, 1998; 2001; Fiol, 2002) and differentiated (Dutton et al., 1994; Elsbach, 1999) in organizational research, organizational identification has been closely associated with a sense of an emotional bond to an organization or its members (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Rousseau, 1998).

Identification research has started to examine the role of affect in identification (Ashforth, 2001; Harquail, 1998; Herrbach, 2006). However, Harquail (1998) cautioned, “use of the term ‘affective identification’ is not to suggest that the affective and cognitive elements of organizational identification can actually be separated in either individuals’ experience of identification or researchers’ measurement of identification. (p. 225).” Recent empirical research on identification in group contexts suggests that cognitive and affective dimensions of identification are closely related, or even, inextricable from one another (Dimmock, Grove, & Eklund, 2005).

While these three dimensions are certainly closely related, attachment theory provides a means to understand the distinctive role of affect in the endurance of organizational identification. Bowlby (1969) introduced attachment theory to explain the formation and persistence of affectional bonds between newborns and a small number of
attachment figures, such as parents or other caregivers, as a means to ensure security and safety. When these bonds are secure, individuals expect that their attachment figures will protect them during crises and demonstrate high levels of trust and respect for them even after experiences of separation (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1973). Recent research has elaborated attachment theory and demonstrated that individuals continue to form attachments into adulthood (Hazan & Shaver 1987; 1990) and in organizational settings with co-workers (Joplin, Nelson & Quick, 1999), mentors (Ragins & Verbos, 2007), supervisors (Riggs & Bretz, 2006), work teams (Prentice, Miller & Lightdale, 1994), and organizations (Stroh, Brett & Reilly, 1994). As secure attachment bonds form, they produce a long-term oriented relationship between an individual and organizations.

Individuals with enduring organizational identification demonstrate comparably secure attachment bonds that serve an important function in the maintenance of their identification with a defunct organization. The emotional bonds associated with secure attachment govern the persistence of identification when organizational membership ends following job loss or organizational death. Many individuals with enduring organizational identification have an elevated sense of job security derived from their sense of an indefinite relationship with their organizations (Rousseau, 1998). If job loss actually happens, the high level of trust embedded in this relationship reduces the likelihood that individuals will perceive psychological contract breach (Robinson, 1996) or stop construing their organizations as benevolent and caring entities.

In summary, enduring organizational identification remains strong after the conclusion of formal or construed membership in an organization; its endurance reflects a
consistently central categorization of an organization within an individual’s social identity, an exceptionally positive evaluation of an organization, and a secure emotional attachment between an individual and an organization. Organizational identification will be more fleeting when these components are relatively weak or absent. I now introduce a theoretical model that explains the role of organizational identification endurance in individuals’ participation in post-death organizing.
CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL MODEL

The theoretical model, which is shown in Figure 2, demonstrates the role of organizational identification endurance as an individual-level mechanism that gives rise to the social processes through which former organizational members perpetuate post-death organizing. In particular, this dissertation examines the role of organizational identification endurance in individual’s propensity to participate in sustenance activities and the consequent effects of these collective efforts on perceptions of an organization’s legacy identity. Drawing on the expanded conceptualization of organizational identification that was presented in the previous chapter, I also identify four antecedent factors to organizational identification that may explain its endurance after the death of an organization from which it is derived. Specifically, the model examines two personality traits and two factors associated with an individual’s experience of organizational life.

In this chapter, I develop the theoretical arguments underlying each of the hypotheses that comprise the dissertation model presented in Figure 2. I first explain the relationship of organizational identification endurance with post-death organizing. To do so, I position participation in post-death organizing as a behavioral expression of the endurance of individuals’ identification with a defunct organization. After introducing the hypotheses underlying the relationship between organizational identification and post-death organizing, I then examine the relationship of each proposed antecedent factor with the endurance of organizational identification.
Expressing Organizational Identification through Sustenance Activities

Former members of defunct organizations participate in post-death organizing in order to sustain valued elements of organizational life, including relationships, artifacts and roles. The identification literature provides a means to understand why individuals participate in these preservation efforts and why they select the specific elements on which they focus their organizing. Carador and Pratt (2006) explained that organizations employ relational, symbolic and behavioral bases through which they foster identification among their members. The close relationship of these three bases of identification with the three commonly valued organizational elements, which are graphically depicted in Figure 3, suggests that individuals’ participation in post-death organizing may be best understood as an expression of their enduring organizational identification.
In the aftermath of organizational death, individuals with enduring organizational identification create new organizations to sustain those elements of organizational life that are most proximal to the bases through which they initially derived their identification. For instance, many organizations foster identification among members through relational channels, such as personal relationships or collective bonds (Carador & Pratt, 2006). The formation of ingroup connections fosters cohesion among members and perceptions of belongingness (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Carador & Pratt, 2006). In such cases, where members derive their organizational identification from their interpersonal relationships, they will recognize these relationships as inherently important organizational attributes and may be particularly inclined to search for ways to preserve ingroup bonds that are threatened by organizational death.

Organizations also use symbolic bases, such as physical or intangible artifacts, to communicate an organizational identity (Cappetta & Gioia, 2006) and shape members’ identification (Fiol & O’Connor, 2006). Members’ exposure to artifacts may lead them to become identified with an organization as they incorporate the underlying symbolic meaning of organizational relics into their own self-concepts (Carador & Pratt, 2006;
Pratt & Rafaeli, 2001). For instance, Rousseau’s (1998) example of UPS workers “bleeding brown” evokes a symbolic internalization of the company’s logo and uniforms. Individuals who have derived their identification from symbolically significant artifacts may be particularly drawn to commemorate them in corporate museums (Casey, 2004) when an organizational death prevents an organization from maintaining them.

Finally, organizations foster identification among members through behavioral expectations embodied in individuals’ role requirements. Organizational roles serve as a primary mechanism for engendering behavioral consistency among members, thus encouraging individuals to define their self-concepts in terms of their role duties or responsibilities (Ashforth, 2001; Carador & Pratt, 2006; Pratt, 1998). When members derive their organizational identification from roles, they may be particularly drawn to create “exroles” (Ashforth, 2001; Ebaugh, 1998) when their active organizational membership ends. Spinoff organizations, in which former members can continue to perform the tasks associated with their previous roles, offer a particularly suitable environment for creating and perpetuating exroles.

While the bases of identification may help to explain the particular types of preservation that may appeal to individuals with enduring organizational identification, why does the endurance of organizational identification more generally motivate them to participate in post-death organizing? Further, Rousseau (1998) suggested that the endurance of organizational identification does not depend on the persistence of situational cues, so why would individuals seek opportunities to preserve valued organizational elements when their organizations die? The three dimensions of organizational identification make salient different perceived threats associated with
organizational death, and specific characteristics of sustenance activities mitigate each of these perceived risks. I will now examine how each of the three components of organizational identification represented in this dissertation motivates individuals’ participation in sustenance activities. These relationships are summarized in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Motives for Participation in Sustenance Activities

First, the central categorization of an organization in an individual’s social identity motivates participation in sustenance activities. Organizational death formally ends an individual’s organizational membership. As individuals engage in reconnecting activities after death (Sutton, 1987), they become involved in other organizations, such as new workplaces, voluntary service projects or outplacement programs. Nonetheless, individuals seek cognitive consistency with the past (Robinson, 1996) and act in ways that preserve their existing knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Greenwald, 1980). By finding ways to enact their identities, individuals with enduring identification re-establish a more cognitively consistent relationship between their
identities and behavior. In the face of organizational death, former members may re-establish cognitive consistency by either shifting their identification and behavior towards new organizations or finding ways to continue enacting their identification with their defunct organization. Strongly-held identification may endure, because it produces “core rigidities” (Fiol, 2001: 695) that may make it practically impossible for an individual not to act in terms of their identification or to stop identifying, even when those organizational attributes on which identification is based become outdated (Fiol, 2002).

After an organization has died, its central categorization in an individual’s social identity motivates their participation in sustenance activities, which provide opportunities for individuals to reminisce about their past experiences. For instance, alumni association meetings frequently feature formal tributes, such as speeches and videos, and more casual sharing of favored memories. Post-death organizing enables cognitive consistency with the past by preserving the social categories with which individuals identify and thus validating the currency of their identification with organizations that no longer exist. For instance, in a prior study (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008), one participant in told me, “I’m still a part of DEC.”

Second, positive evaluations of an organization, which are associated with the endurance of organizational identification, also motivate individuals to participate in post-death organizing. Frequently characterized as a failure (e.g. Amburgey, Kelly & Barnett, 1993; Baum & Mezias, 1992; Hambrick & d’Aveni, 1989), organizational death threatens an organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and produces a comparable threat to individuals’ social identities (Shepherd, 2003). In the face of such challenges, individuals will seek ways to affirm the positive character of their organizational
identities (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996) and their own identification (Riketta, et al., 2006). These threats motivate individuals to take action that protects or restores their positive evaluations of their organizations (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996; Jetten, Postmes & McAuliffe, 2002; Ouwerkerk, De Gilder & Vries, 2000). Sustenance activities provide an opportunity for such individuals to affirm their positive evaluations of their dead organizations, and thus their own social identities, in the face of public disdain. Sustenance activities frequently involve social activities or museum exhibits that commemorate events associated with an organization, such as its founding or an anniversary of a key milestone. If identification is less firmly grounded, individuals will not experience a sufficient threat to their own social identities to warrant engaging in behavior that affirmed or restored the status of an organizational identity.

Third, secure attachments with their former organizations encourage former organizational members to participate in sustenance activities. Organizational death separates individuals from their attachment figures, and attachment theory suggests ways that individuals with secure attachments will react to such outcomes. During times of crisis, securely attached individuals seek the protection of their attachment figures and engage in attachment behaviors that are designed to restore their proximity to them (Bowlby, 1973). After an attachment figure dies, these individuals engage in mourning practices, which allows them to adapt to their losses (Bowlby, 1961) and look for ways to maintain “continuing bonds” (Klass, Silverman & Nickman, 1996; Worden, 2002). These individuals reform their lives in ways that allow them to maintain a relationship with a dead attachment figure without “falsifying reality” (Bowlby, 1980). For instance,
a widow may keep a dead spouse’s clothing hanging in a closet or continue wearing her wedding ring.

In the context of organizational death, individuals with enduring organizational identification will be drawn towards activities that offer an opportunity to maintain their secure emotional attachments with their organizations. Securely attached individuals demonstrate greater involvement in pursuing “symbolic immortality,” (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998: 148) which are “attempts to preserve and develop a personal sense of continuity and lastingness.” Sustenance activities, which can include restoration of an organization’s products, compilation of an organization’s history or maintenance of a directory of former employees, fulfill this need for symbolic immortality by preserving what individuals value about an organization, and thus ensuring access to it in the future. Having internalized a defunct organization’s characteristics into their own self-concepts (Rousseau, 1998), individuals with enduring organizational identification would thus favor participation in sustenance activities not only for the symbolic immortality it provides for their organization but also for themselves.

In summary, instances of death produce several motives for participating in post-death organizing among individuals with enduring organizational identification. These individuals engage in sustenance activities to restore cognitive consistency with their past, affirm positive evaluations of their organizations and their own self-concepts, and maintain emotional bonds with lost attachment figures.

**H1:** The endurance of organizational identification will be positively related to participation in sustenance activities.
Creating Strong Perceptions of Legacy Organizational Identity

Sustenance activities are the primary means of perpetuating post-death organizing over time. Former organizational members’ collective efforts to maintain new organizations facilitate ongoing preservation of valued organizational elements. If sustenance activities cease, these new organizations would be expected to dissipate and eventually suffer their own deaths. These same activities give sustenance to the legacy organizational identities that are put forth by participants in post-death organizing.

Former members’ collective participation in a new organization facilitates organizational sensemaking processes (Maitlis, 2005), through which leaders and members of these new organizations develop and put forth shared accounts about organizational life and their experiences in it. For instance, when members of alumni associations participate in scheduled meetings or social activities, they not only contribute to the ongoing organizing of a new organization but also share stories about organizational life and contemporary interpretations of their experiences, thus contributing to the creation and promulgation of an organization’s legacy identity. In a previous qualitative study (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008), informants stated that they were “reliving the glory days,” “keeping the spirit of the company alive,” and “talking about what [company name] still stands for today.” Such sensemaking processes perpetuate shared understandings of the central, distinctive and enduring characteristics (Albert & Whetten, 1985) of their defunct organizations. Members who participate in such sustenance activities would be more likely to recognize the legacy identities of their dead organizations.

H2: The degree of involvement in sustenance activities will be positively related to the perceived strength of a legacy organizational identity
Individuals whose organizational identification endures over time will likely perceive a strong sense of legacy organizational identity exclusive of their participation in post-death organizing. In their study of art museum patrons, Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn (1995) found that individuals maintained identification with, and knowledgeable about the organization even if they did not participate in social activities with other members. This research suggests that, in the context of organizational death, former organizational members may remain identified with their organizations without participating in sustenance activities. Given individuals’ motives for cognitive consistency (Fiske & Taylor, 1984), former members with enduring organizational identification, which remains strongly held and cognitively salient would be particularly attuned to contemporary shared sensemaking about their defunct organization. Their continued interest in their defunct organization would certainly make such individuals more aware of the efforts at post-death organizing taken by others. Further, their exposure to the ongoing interpretive efforts involved in post-death organizing would likely lead them to construe their organization’s legacy in vibrant terms. I thus expect a positive, direct relationship between the endurance of organizational identification and the perceived strength of a legacy organizational identity.

H3: The endurance of organizational identification will be positively related to the perceived strength of a legacy organizational identity.

**Antecedents to Organizational Identification**

This dissertation seeks to explain why individuals continue to identify with a defunct organization. Answering this question requires an examination of those situational characteristics and individual traits that foster organizational identification and its endurance in “the aftermath of employment” (Rousseau, 1998: 229). In the next
section, I derive several hypotheses about the relationship among four antecedent factors – Sustained Success, Relational Orientation, need for Organizational Identification, and Positive Affectivity – and the endurance of organizational identification.

**Situational Characteristics** Identification research demonstrates inconsistent support for organization-level antecedents to identification. For instance, Mael and Ashforth (1992) found a positive relationship between organizational identification strength and both organizational prestige and distinctiveness. However, Kreiner and Ashforth’s (2004) hypotheses about the effects of reputation and organizational identity strength on identification were not supported. Despite these mixed results, situational characteristics are likely to have some influence on the endurance of organizational identification, because individuals who deeply identify with one organization are unlikely to do so with all of their organizations. Two situational characteristics are particularly likely to influence the extent to which individuals remain identified with an organization after it has died: exposure to sustained organizational success and perceived relational identity orientation.

First, while a small number of organizational deaths result from the lucrative sales of highly successful organizations (Schonfeld, 1999), most instances of death follow extended periods of organizational decline. Poor financial condition often precipitates a closing decision or acquisition agreement. However, participants in post-death organizing relate their ongoing interest in these organizations to their earlier involvement in a period of sustained organizational success. As one informant in a prior study (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008) told me, “when I was there, [company name] was on top of the world. We were growing rapidly and making money hand over fist.” When an organization
experiences a period of sustained success, it acquires an attractive organizational identity with which members will seek to identify due to the construed personal sense of prestige that such an affiliation confers (Dutton et al., 1994). Thus, organizational identification should be more likely to endure when individuals were previously exposed to successful organizational performance for an extended period of time. Individuals who were only organizational members amidst decline are unlikely to have ever been attracted to an organizational identity. They will also be less inclined to continue identifying with it, because they will likely re-orient their social identities towards those social groups that confer some personal sense of prestige or value (Tajfel, 1978).

Exposure to sustained organizational success is predicated on two underlying factors: the length of time an individual worked for an organization and the extent to which organizations achieved success during that period of time. The endurance of organizational identification may be expected to be more common among long service employees (Rousseau, 1998). Individuals who worked for an organization for longer periods of time will have a greater opportunity to experience periods of effective organizational performance. In addition, those individuals whose periods of employment were generally characterized by organizational success would have relatively more opportunity to experience an attractive organizational identity and thus become and remain identified.

\[ H4: \text{The degree of exposure to an organization's sustained success will be positively related to the endurance of organizational identification.} \]

\[ H4a: \text{Length of an individual's employment period will be positively related to the endurance of organizational identification.} \]
H4b: Successful organizational performance during an individual’s employment period will be positively related to the endurance of organizational identification.

Second, Rousseau (1998) theorized that the exchange of particularistic rewards, such as love, status and service (Foa & Foa, 1974), increases individuals’ identification with an organization. When individuals accept particularistic rewards, they initiate a socioemotionally-oriented exchange relationship (Tsui, Pearce, Porter & Tripoli, 1997: 1092), which “entails unspecified, broad and open-ended obligations on the part of both parties” (Blau, 1986), with two outcomes associated with organizational identification. First, the exchange of particularistic rewards alters individuals’ evaluations of an organization that provides them in a positive manner (Rousseau, 1998). Recipients of particularistic rewards come to view their organizations as benevolent and high-status entities. Second, such exchanges also lead individuals to develop dependencies on their organizations that are not easily broken when an organization dies (Rousseau, 1998). They interpret offers of particularistic rewards as signs of caring and concern that are consistent with how securely attached individuals construe their relationship with their attachment figures.

An organization with a relational identity orientation (Brickson, 2005; 580), in which “the emphasis is on enhancing the welfare of particular others…and on maintaining these relationships,” may be more likely to offer particularistic rewards and thus foster identification endurance among its members. Organizational identity orientation refers to the nature of assumed relationships between an organization and both its members and stakeholders; like individuals, organizations may have identity orientations that are individualistic, relational, or collectivistic in nature (Brickson, 2005;
Relationally-oriented organizations encourage long-term, open-ended exchange relationships with their members and mutual expectations of support (Rousseau, 1995, Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). Through their use of particularistic rewards and attention to interpersonal relationships, these organizations will cultivate positive evaluations and emotional bonds with their members that are characteristic of enduring identification. Individuals who perceive their organizations identities in more relational terms would be particularly likely to maintain their sense of identification with an organization after it died.

\[ H5: \text{Perceived relational organizational identity orientation will be positively related to the endurance of organizational identification.} \]

**Individual Traits** Not all members of organizations who are exposed to sustained success and construe a relational identity orientation will remain strongly identified after organizational death. Some organizational members may be more prone to maintain their organizational identification than others based on individual differences. In particular, an individual’s need for organizational identification and positive affectivity may make them more likely to remain strongly identified after organizational death.

Glynn (1998) proposed that individuals’ variance in their propensity to identify with organizations may be understood in terms of their need for organizational identification (NOID). Characterized as a generalized personality trait, NOID represents “an individual’s need to maintain a social identity derived from membership in a larger, more impersonal general social category of a particular collective” (Glynn, 1998: 238-239). The NOID trait has been distinguished from the related construct of need for affiliation (McClelland, 1987), which represents an individual’s concern for having positive, high quality relationships with others. Glynn (1998) wrote that interpersonal
bonds may facilitate organizational identification but were not a requirement for it. Individuals may identify with an organization without maintaining close relationships with other organizational members. For instance, individuals may closely identify with a college or professional sports team and not experience a need to interact with its players or other fans.

Some individuals are more predisposed than others to identify with their organizations, and high NOIDs may be particularly inclined to remain identified with a defunct organization. Individuals with a higher level of NOID have a greater interest in social inclusion than lower NOIDs, who are primarily focused on maintaining their personal distinctiveness (Glynn, 1998). Since membership in social groups is particularly important to individuals with higher levels of NOID, social identities will make up a greater share of their self-concepts than individual identities. High NOIDs may be particularly likely to have central categorizations characteristic of enduring organizational identification in order to fulfill their elevated need for membership in organizations.

Higher NOID has been found to have a positive relationship with positive identification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). Individuals with high levels of NOID may be predisposed to perceive their organizations in positive terms. When they perceive attractiveness in their organizations, high NOIDs incorporate those characteristics that they deem positive into their own identities. Doing so enables them to fill gaps in their self-definitions or to meet their needs for ego enhancement (Glynn, 1998). These individuals will be particularly drawn to the exchange of particularistic rewards, which are often prominent in organizations where strong organizational identification is more
common and enhance the positive evaluations associated with it (Rousseau, 1998). Open exchange of such rewards foster long-term relationships that are particularly resistant to change, even in the face of organizational death.

_H6: NOID will be positively related to the endurance of organizational identification._

In addition to NOID, Kreiner and Ashforth (2004) found support for a relationship between organizational identification strength and an individual’s predisposition to experience pleasant affective states over time and across contexts. Even though the pleasantness of individuals’ affect may change in different circumstances (Feldman Barrett & Russell, 1998; Russell, 2003), some individuals have a greater propensity to experience positive emotions on a consistent basis than others (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988).

Positive affectivity influences organizational identification endurance in two ways. First, it leads individuals to hold more positive evaluations of their organizations. Positive affective states lead individuals to engage in less thorough decision making processes (Elsbach & Barr, 1999) and encourage more positive evaluations of social stimuli (Isen & Shalker, 1982). Kreiner & Ashforth (2004) found that positive affect was related to positively-valenced organizational identification. Specifically, positive affect influences organizational identification by leading individuals to form positive evaluations characteristic of enduring organizational identification.

Positive affectivity also likely influences the security of attachment bonds between individuals and their organizations. Through their early experiences with caregivers, children form attachment styles that influence the nature of their attachment bonds and are relatively stable across the lifespan and in different contexts (Bartholomew...
Attachment styles differ in terms of whether individuals’ working models, or representations, of self and others are characterized by positive or negative affect. Individuals who consistently experience positive affect about themselves and others will form secure attachment bonds with their targets of attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1990), such as their organizations or co-workers, that are characteristic of enduring organizational identification. Secure attachment bonds are unlikely to dissipate upon separation from an attachment figure (Bowlby, 1973).

\[ H7: \text{Positive affectivity will be positively related to the endurance of organizational identification} \]

Summary Model

To summarize, this dissertation will examine three primary research questions. First, why do former members of defunct organizations participate in post-death organizing? Second, why do individuals continue to identify with defunct organizations? Lastly, why do former organizational members continue to hold strong perceptions of a defunct organization’s legacy identity? Taken together, the hypotheses identified in this chapter comprise the theoretical model that is presented in Figure 4. I expect that organizational identification endurance will be positively related to individuals’ participation in sustenance activities (H1). I also expect that participation in sustenance activities (H2) and organizational identification endurance (H3) will be positively related to the perceived strength of a legacy organizational identity. Finally, I hypothesized that four antecedent factors will be positively related to the endurance of individuals’ identification with a defunct organization: exposure to organizational success (H4), perceived relational identity orientation (H5), need for organizational identification (H6),
and positive affectivity (H7). In the next chapter, I review the methodological approach used to test these hypotheses.
CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

To test the hypotheses represented in my theoretical model, I conducted a survey among former employees of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), which was dissolved following its acquisition in 1998, 10 years prior to the collection of data. In this research, I specifically focused on former members’ efforts to sustain their organizational relationships through alumni associations. As noted earlier, post-death organizing may involve a number of other organizational forms, such as corporate museums or spinoff organizations, I focused on alumni associations since they are inherently more inclusive and available to a broad range of former organizational members. For instance, spinoff companies often involve a small or specific subset of former members with specific skill sets or capabilities and others cannot freely participate in them.

Following the procedures of the tailored design method (Dillman, 2000), I developed a survey that encompassed a combination of multi-item scales, open-ended qualitative measures, and demographic-oriented questions. While most of the quantitative scales were adapted from previously published research, I also developed and pretested a new scale to measure participation in sustenance activities. I pilot tested the questionnaire with eight individuals and conducted brief follow-up interviews with them to gather feedback for further refinement of the instrument. I now outline the procedures that I employed to collect and analyze the data for this dissertation.

Research Site

Given the specific focus on former members’ sustenance of organizational relationships, I specifically searched for instances of post-death organizing that included
corporate alumni associations in searching for a research site. I ruled out instances of post-death organizing that existed for less than five years, since shorter-term organizing may be better understood as extended parting ceremonies (Harris & Sutton, 1986). Based on these requirements, I identified several possible organizations on which to focus my study. I ultimately chose DEC due to its large size and worldwide presence, which provided the largest and most diverse potential survey population among the organizations under consideration. Appendix A provides a synopsis of the history of DEC, from its founding in 1957 through its acquisition by Compaq in 1998.

I contacted leaders of all 26 of DEC’s alumni associations around the world² with a request to distribute my survey to both their members and other former employees for whom they had contact information. I reached agreements with 18 of these organizations to issue a survey announcement with instructions for how to access the survey. In addition, the largest alumni group, The Digital Alumni, agreed to issue a pre-announcement and a follow-up announcement midway through the survey period. The survey was available to participants in both paper and electronic versions.

Participants

Any individual who worked as an employee of DEC prior to its June 1998 acquisition by Compaq was eligible to participate in the survey. While no financial incentives were offered, participants were offered a summary report of the findings. As is the case with most, if not all, defunct organizations, neither total employment figures nor comprehensive contact information for all living former DEC employees were

² I established a roster of DEC alumni groups through an extensive internet search and conversations with several leaders of these groups. During the course of the study, I learned of several regional alumni groups that did not have websites. As I learned of these groups, I extended invitations to participate to their members by contacting the group leaders but did not alter the survey in any way.
available. Thus, former employees of DEC collectively represent a “hidden population” (Heckathorn, 1997; 2002), whose members cannot be readily identified and enumerated in the broader social context. Hidden populations effectively prohibit construction of a true sampling frame, from which a random sample could be drawn. In such cases, Sagalnik and Heckathorn (2004) recommend respondent-driven sampling procedures that initially rely on “seeds,” or known members of a hidden population to complete a survey and to distribute it to other members not known and otherwise unavailable to the researcher.

The alumni groups, whose records included contact information for active members, former members and some non-members, provided the most complete source of potential seeds in the population of former DEC employees. While most groups were unwilling to provide their contact lists for direct contact, they did issue announcements to individuals included in these lists on my behalf. Following completion of the survey, I encouraged participants to share the survey announcement with any former DEC colleagues with whom they were in contact. Of the 2,192 individuals who completed the survey, 757 respondents (34.5%) reported that they were not alumni group members, suggesting that the survey was broadly distributed beyond the initial group of seeds.

Reliance on chain-referral methods raises risk of response bias towards those with large numbers of interrelationships (Berg, 1988). When initial seeds have broader social networks than subsequent rounds of respondents, respondent-driven sampling may produce results that are skewed towards the former group and not effectively represent the overall population (Sagalnik & Heckathorn, 2004). In this study, respondent-driven sampling raises the risk of response bias towards active alumni group members. To
assess the breadth of respondents’ social networks, I asked them to make a list of the former DEC employees with whom they were regularly in contact. Table 1, which provides a summary of descriptive statistics related to the survey sample, compares alumni group members (n=1426) with non-alumni group members (n=757). On average, alumni group members and non-members reported 6.4 and 5.6 relationships, respectively. While a t-test revealed a statistically significant difference (p< .001) between these two means, the size of social networks of alumni group members and non-members are not substantively different. Former employees of DEC thus had somewhat comparable likelihoods of being invited to participate in the survey whether or not they were members of an alumni group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics of Survey Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Sample (n=2192)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean/% S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>55.4 7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Tenure</td>
<td>14.0 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years since DEC departure</td>
<td>13.1 4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported Relationships</td>
<td>6.1 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who are male</td>
<td>72.9 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>70.0 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% employed as manager/supervisor</td>
<td>45.4 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with non-US work location</td>
<td>41.8 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the total population of DEC employees is unavailable, a complete response rate cannot be calculated. However, many of the alumni groups were able to provide counts of the former employees on their contact lists. Table 2 lists the six largest DEC
alumni groups and the number of respondents who claimed membership in these groups. Of the 3340 members in these groups, 748 completed the survey, for a partial response rate of 22.3%. This response rate is consistent with response rates of prior published studies that relied on web-based means of contact (Kaplowitz, Hadlock & Levine, 2004). The response rate was particularly high for the Digital Alumni Group, which made three separate announcements to individuals on its list. The response rate was also relatively higher for the Divorced Digits, an Australian group that provided me with its membership list, thus allowing me to extend direct and individualized invitations to potential participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Membership*</th>
<th>Survey Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Digital Alumni</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>305 (31.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exdecfinland</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>90 (18.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Alumni Austria</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>70 (18.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Divorced Digits (Australia)</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>76 (27.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexodus (UK)</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>131 (17.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC Canada Alumni</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>76 (16.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>3340</strong></td>
<td><strong>748 (22.4%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Membership totals were reduced by 5% to account for individuals with outdated email addresses.

Table 1 provides a summary of descriptive statistics about the overall survey sample. Participants reported being an average of 55.4 years old, with a range of 34 to 80 years. Participants were asked to list their years of employment, including up to 3 separate employment periods. Using these data, I calculated participants’ length of employment and the number of years since they left the organization. On average, participants worked for DEC for 14 years and left the organization 13.1 years ago, or 3.1
years prior to the closing of DEC.\textsuperscript{3} Men comprised 72.9% of respondents; this gender distribution closely tracks with the gender composition of new entrants to the computer industry in the 1990s, when DEC was still an active entity (Computing Research News, 1998). In addition, 70% of respondents reported having at least a college degree. Finally, 41.8% of respondents reported working for DEC outside the US. Table 3 provides a summary of the number of respondents sorted by the 22 countries in which they primarily worked.

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Primary Work Countries of Respondents}
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
 & Frequency & Percent \\
\hline
USA & 1294 & 59.2 \\
UK & 147 & 6.7 \\
Australia & 120 & 5.5 \\
Canada & 104 & 4.8 \\
Finland & 99 & 4.5 \\
Italy & 92 & 4.2 \\
Germany & 71 & 3.2 \\
Austria & 67 & 3.1 \\
Portugal & 43 & 2.0 \\
Belgium & 42 & 1.9 \\
France & 31 & 1.4 \\
Switzerland & 28 & 1.3 \\
Hong Kong/China & 15 & .7 \\
Brazil & 11 & .5 \\
Japan & 8 & .4 \\
Ireland & 4 & .2 \\
New Zealand & 3 & .1 \\
Singapore & 2 & .1 \\
Netherlands & 2 & .1 \\
India & 2 & .1 \\
Israel & 1 & .0 \\
Argentina & 1 & .0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\textsuperscript{3} I compared the last date of employment to the final date of the survey period to determine how much time had lapsed since an individual left DEC. DEC closed in June 1998, and the survey data collection was concluded in June 2008.
Measures

The survey instrument included a combination of demographic questions, quantitative scales that measured many of the constructs included in this model, and open-ended, qualitative items. The scales included a minimum of three items in order to assist in the measurement of reliability (Harris & Johnson, 2002) and the meeting of identification requirements for structural equation modeling (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1990). For those scales that were drawn from prior published research, the wording of items was adapted to incorporate past tense phrasing that reflected DEC’s defunct status. For example, the item “I often think about the fact that I am a member of [company name]” was reworded to “I often think about the fact that I was a member of DEC.” Appendix B provides the complete scales for each construct with items in their original format. Appendix C, which presents a paper-format version of the complete survey instrument, demonstrates how these items were reworded for this study.

Need for Organizational Identification (NOID) The NOID construct was measured using a seven item scale ($\alpha = .71$) developed by Kreiner & Ashforth (2004). Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 1=strong disagree to 5=strongly agree. Items for this scale include: “An important part of who I am would be missing if I didn’t belong to a work organization” And “Generally, I do not feel a need to identify with an organization that I am working for (reverse coded).”

Positive Affectivity Positive affectivity was measured using a scale of ten affects (Harris & Johnson, 2002; Nezlek, 2005). The design of this section of the survey incorporates formatting considerations proposed by Watson, Clark
& Tellegen (1988) in their research on positive affect. To reduce the risk of social desirability bias, respondents were also presented with ten items associated with unpleasant affect. The twenty affect items were presented in random order. Each item was measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=never and 5=always.

**Exposure to Sustained Success** Using archival records, I tabulated DEC’s annual financial performance and employment totals for each year between 1960 and 1998. Specifically, I recorded reported profit, revenue and total employment figures for each year. I asked respondents to list their years of employment with DEC, including up to three separate periods of employment. For each individual, I calculated exposure to sustained success with two measures. First, I summed participants’ reported years of employment to determine each individual’s overall tenure with the organization. Second, I calculated the percentage of each individual’s employed years that were marked by either an increase in overall employment or positive profit figures.

**Perceived Relational Identity Orientation** I measured individuals’ perceptions of DEC’s organizational identity orientation using procedures recommended by Brickson (2005). I presented respondents with an adaptation of the Ten Statements Test (TST), derived from Kuhn and McPortland’s (1954) Twenty Statements Test. I asked participants to complete the sentence stem, “DEC was —,” up to ten times. Drawing on Albert & Whetten’s (1985) conceptualization of organization identity, I asked them to focus on those qualities that are most central, distinctive and enduring to their understanding of DEC. I also asked them to think about DEC as a whole and not in terms of specific individuals or departments where they may have worked.
Respondents provided 13,070 separate responses, or an average of 5.96 responses per person. Each response was coded for its valence (positive or negative) and the organizational identity orientation it reflected (relational, individualistic or collectivistic). Drawing on a random sample of responses, I created a coding scheme that outlined the types of responses that corresponded with each category. The development of this coding scheme was guided by prior published research on organizational identity orientation (e.g. Brickson, 2005; 2007)\(^4\). Using the coding scheme, a second coder and I each coded a subset of data for valence and identity orientation and then discussed discrepancies in our coding and possible revisions to the coding scheme.

After three iterations of this process, we considered the coding scheme complete and proceeded with independently coding the full set of responses. While some statements were assigned codes that reflected two identity orientations, almost all statements were assigned a single code. Table 4 provides illustrative examples of these responses grouped according to the valence and identity orientation categories to which they correspond. For the responses that we both coded\(^5\), kappa was .7, which suggests adequate interrater reliability (Landis & Koch, 1977; cf. Brickson, 2005). After coding these data, we met to discuss and resolve discrepancies in our coding. I then revised the coding of the complete data set based on these discussions with the second coder.

Of primary importance in calculating the values for this measure were the items that were coded both positive and relational. As can be seen in Table 4, statements that were coded as positive and relational were those that demonstrated a focus on the

\(^4\) In addition to examples shared in these articles, I also reviewed the coding scheme used in this research, which was provided to me by the author.

\(^5\) I coded all reported responses, while the second coder was given a subset of the data (approximately 38%) for coding to assess interrater reliability.
functional or constructive use of relationships in organizational life. For instance, the statement “DEC was open door in its management style” indicates this respondent’s belief that leaders practiced a style of management that both welcomed and invited employees to visit them in their offices, which suggests an overarching concern for relationships with members. The “open door” language also conveys a positive evaluation of these practices. Not all relational statements were positive in nature. For instance, the statement, “DEC was an incestuous company” suggests that members had close relationships that were either inappropriate or counterproductive.

### TABLE 4
**Illustrative Examples of Perceived Organizational Identity Orientation Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Valence</th>
<th>Individualistic</th>
<th>Organizational Identity Orientation</th>
<th>Collectivistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Positive | • Ahead of its time in its technology  
• Leading edge  
• An innovative company  
• A company that created markets for its products | • A true partner with its customers  
• Team spirit – employees helped each other  
• Caring about the welfare of employees  
• My second family  
• Open door in its management style | • Keen to be a good citizen in the countries where it operated  
• Always thinking globally  
• A shining beacon of industrial growth for New England  
• A trailblazer among tech companies |
| Negative | • Arrogant  
• Blind to emerging technology and software  
• Poor at marketing  
• Sometimes too bureaucratic  
• Shortsighted when it came to the PC revolution | • Over-staffed with over-paid managers  
• Took the technical people for granted  
• Very stressful during the last 5 years due to downsizing  
• An incestuous company | • Not very good at positioning itself in the corporate world  
• Confused with “Digital Clock [Co.]” when we sponsored the Vienna Marathon  
• Undervalued in the investor and analyst world |

**Organizational Identification Endurance** The endurance of organizational identification was measured using a three-part scale developed by Cameron (2004). The
three subscales correspond to the cognitive, evaluative and affective dimensions of organizational identification. Higher values on these scale items correspond with stronger organizational identification and the hypotheses in this dissertation concern the endurance of organizational identification. However, in the context of post-death organizing, items that measure organizational identification strength can be used to measure its endurance, since the questions were reframed in the past tense and are posed to a population that recognizes its organization as a defunct entity. Being asked in the present day and focusing on an organization that ceased to exist at some earlier point in time, these questions tap into both underlying characteristics of identification endurance: its strength at a point in time and its durability beyond organizational death.

The seven items included in the cognitive subscale ($\alpha = .87$) were used to measure the extent to which an organization represents a central categorization in individuals’ social identities. A sample item is “Having been an employee of DEC is an important reflection of who I am.” The evaluative subscale ($\alpha = .73$) assessed the extent to which individuals held positive evaluations of DEC. Finally, the affective subscale ($\alpha = .81$) was used to measure to extent to which individuals had secure attachment bonds with DEC. Sample items for this scale include: “I feel strong ties to other former employees of DEC” and “in a group of former DEC employees, I really feel that I belong.” For each of these scales, items were measured using a five-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

**Participation in Sustenance Activities** Through an examination of several instances of post-death organizing, I compiled a list of activities that are commonly associated with sustaining relationships with former co-workers. Following procedures
recommended by Devellis (2003), I created and pretested a scale of eight items ($\alpha = .83$) that asked participants the extent to which they engage in specific behaviors. The items in this scale were measured on a five-point Likert scale where 1 = never and 5 = always. Items for this scale include: “I keep my contact information updated in DEC former employee group directory(ies)” and “I participate in social activities with other former DEC employees.” Whereas researchers have questioned the validity of self-reported measures of individual performance, Schoorman & Mayer (2008) found that performance assessments were more highly correlated when framed in terms of a common perspective, such as that of a supervisor or peer. For these questions, I engaged a common perspective by introducing the items with the following statement: “How would other former DEC employees assess the extent to which you are involved in the following activities?”

**Perceived Legacy Identity Strength** The perceived strength of legacy organizational identity was measured using a four-item scale ($\alpha = .62$) adapted from measures developed by Kreiner and Ashforth (2004). Each item was measured on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Items for this scale include “The vision of DEC remains clear and unique” and “There is a strong feeling of unity among the former employees of DEC.”

**Demographic Variables** I asked participants to respond to several questions related to their demographic status. These items asked them to report: dates of employment with DEC, current age, current employment status, gender, education level, primary work location and primary career field. I also asked them to indicate whether they had worked at any time for any of eight other organizations in the technology

Common Method Variance

The design of this study introduces two potential sources of common method variance, which threatens conclusions about the relationships among measures by introducing systematic measurement error (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). First, the same respondents reported data for both predictor and outcome variables, which raises the risk of self-report biases, such as consistency effects (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977), positive affectivity (Watson & Clark, 1984) and illusory correlations (Berman & Kenny, 1976). Second, many of the variables in the survey were measured using five-point, Likert-type scales that utilized similar or identical scale descriptions (e.g. “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). This common format may “increase the possibility that some of the covariation observed among the constructs examined may be the result of the consistency in the scale properties rather than the content of the items” (Podsakoff et al., 2003: 884). Common method bias introduces systematic measurement error into data, which when analyzed, may inflate or deflate the observed relationships between variables.

Podsakoff et al. (2003) provided numerous recommendations for controlling the influence of common method variance on observed results. The authors reviewed several procedural remedies to reduce these risks, four of which were incorporated into the design of this study. First, I intermixed items related to different constructs in sections of the survey (Kline, Sulsky & Rever-Moriyama, 2000). Second, I opted to use a relatively
long scale to measure organizational identification (Cameron, 2004) to minimize the influence of respondents’ short-term memory of prior responses (Harrison, McLaughlin & Coalter, 1996). Third, I did not ask participants to provide their names and asked them to be completely honest in their responses. Assurances of anonymity, in conjunction with explicit requests for honesty, limit respondents’ evaluation apprehension and reduce the risks that they will edit their responses in socially desirable ways (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Finally, I provided specific labels for the midpoints of all scales (e.g. “sometimes”, “neutral”, etc.), which has been found to reduce acquiescence bias (Tourangeau, Rips & Rasinski, 2000).

In the event that procedural measures are unable to eliminate common method variance, statistical techniques may be used to assess and control it. I employed two specific statistical techniques to further control common method variance. First, I employed Harman’s single-factor test, in which all variables are subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. Common method variance may be substantial when a single factor is extracted or a primary factor accounts for most of the variance (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). I conducted an exploratory factor analysis, in which I included the measures associated with NOID, positive affectivity, organizational identification, participation in sustenance activities and perceived organizational identity strength. Table 5 provides a summary of the unrotated solution, which included six distinct factors, none of which accounted for a majority of the variance.
TABLE 5  
Harman’s Single-factor Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Extraction method: Principal Components Analysis

Second, I conducted a post-hoc analysis of the possible effect of positive affectivity, which may lead individuals to respond favorably to a variety of items and thus produce common method variance (Burke, Brief & George, 1993). In this analysis, I examined the influence of positive affect on the relationships of organizational identification with perceived organizational identity strength (H3) and need for organizational identification (H6). Using single-method-factor analysis procedures (Podsakoff et al., 2003), I allowed the measures for these three variables to load on both their theoretical constructs as well as the latent construct of positive affectivity. The results of this analysis are reported in the next chapter in conjunction with a presentation of the findings.

Data Analysis

I analyzed my data using structural equation modeling (SEM) procedures. SEM uses the principles of maximum likelihood estimation regression to calculate direct effects, indirect effects and overall model fit (Musil, Jones & Warner, 1998). Since it takes measurement error into account, SEM offers greater reliability and validity for
statistical analysis of complex phenomena than traditional multiple regression techniques (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). While SEM does not provide a means to assess causality with cross-sectional data, it does allow testing of an overall model instead of just the individual relationships that comprise it.

I employed two SEM procedures to analyze my data. First, I developed a measurement model comprised of the latent variables in the theoretical model and the indicators drawn from the survey data that were expected to measure them. I conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess whether these indicators were appropriate measures for the latent constructs. Items with standardized factor loadings below .50 were removed from the model. Following consultation of modification indices, I specified measurement error covariance terms between several pairs of standard errors of items that were worded or structured in similar ways (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Second, I developed a structural model, which incorporates the theoretically derived relationships that were expected among the latent variables. After testing an initial model, I engaged in model trimming, in which individual paths were added or dropped one at a time, based on consideration of chi-square difference tests.

While SEM allows the testing of some of the assumptions required for multiple regression procedures, it does assume that indicator variables are normally distributed (Schmacker & Lomax, 2004). Prior to conducting my analysis, I examined each variable to determine whether any of them violated this assumption through calculation of skewness and kurtosis statistics. Table 6 presents the skewness and kurtosis statistics for each measured variable that is included in the model. Critical ratios (“c.r.” in Table 4 headings) that exceed +/- 1.96 are indicative of nonnormal distributions (Byrne, 2001).
## TABLE 6
Normality Statistics for Measured Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>min</th>
<th>max</th>
<th>skew</th>
<th>c.r.</th>
<th>kurtosis</th>
<th>c.r.</th>
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<tr>
<td>YrsSinceDEC</td>
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<td>Yrs Employed</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Evaluative5</td>
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<td>-6.004</td>
<td>-.283</td>
<td>-2.332</td>
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<td>-.636</td>
<td>-10.497</td>
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<td>Relaxed</td>
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<td>3.359</td>
<td>27.722</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multivariate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>238.393</td>
<td>83.148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since several variables were skewed and/or kurtotic, I employed the bootstrap procedure in my analysis (Efron, 1982). The bootstrap procedure is a resampling technique, which involves the use of multiple subsamples, randomly drawn with replacement, of the same size as the overall survey population. These subsamples are then used as the basis for calculating parameter estimates and goodness-of-fit indices (Byrne, 2001). The bootstrap procedure may only be used when the variables in the model have no missing values, so I listwise deleted any cases with missing values to create a compatible data set (n=1690).

SEM also assumes that all included variables are continuous in nature (Bollen, 1989a). As is the case with many studies of social phenomena, this research involves a series of scales comprised of categorical, likert-type items. However, this assumption has been shown to be most important for two-category items or scales with limited range (Byrne, 2001; Green, Akey, Fleming Hershberger & Marquis, 1997). Bentler and Chou (1987:88) found that “continuous methods can be used with little worry when a variable has four or more categories.”
CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

Before reviewing the results of the statistical analysis, I briefly summarize descriptive statistics for the measures included in the model, as well as a series of demographic variables. Table 7 displays means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations for all of these variables. While organizational identification has been modeled as a tridimensional construct, only the values for the second-order factor, which is used in measuring the relationships in the structural model, are included here (cf. Gerbing, Hamilton & Freeman, 1994). While Table 7 does provide some evidence of moderate correlations among variables included in the model (Lines 6 through 13), these values do not approach what researchers have considered problematic levels of multicollinearity for SEM procedures (Maruyama, 1997).
### TABLE 7
Means, Standard Deviations and Bivariate Correlations

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
<td>55.40</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender (1=Male)</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. % with Bachelor's Degree or higher</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Age at Hire</td>
<td>28.20</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Supervisor/Manager status</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Total Length of Employment (in years)</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>6.49</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>-11**</td>
<td>-30**</td>
<td>.13**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. % of Employed Years with Growth</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-06**</td>
<td>-21**</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Perceived Relational Orientation</td>
<td>43.65</td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
<td>-.06**</td>
<td>.12**</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. nOID</td>
<td>20.19 (4.04)</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.06**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.06**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Positive Affectivity</td>
<td>27.87 (3.48)</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>.06**</td>
<td>-.01**</td>
<td>-.09**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.06**</td>
<td>.14**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Organizational Identification</td>
<td>12.31 (4.10)</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.06**</td>
<td>-.07**</td>
<td>-.13**</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Participation in Sustenance Activities</td>
<td>17.20 (2.46)</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>.08**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.09**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Perceived Organizational Identity Strength</td>
<td>9.80 (3.27)</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>-.07**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.097**</td>
<td>-.07**</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.15**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.43**</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.62</td>
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</table>

Cronbach alpha values reported on diagonal for scales.

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

For scales, overall mean scores are followed by individual item means (in parentheses)
Table 7 provides mean values for the overall scales and individual items that are associated with the latent variables in the structural model. Of particular note, the mean individual item score for organizational identification endurance (Item #11) was 4.1 (on a scale of 1 to 5), among survey respondents, who, as noted in Table 1 earlier, stopped working for DEC an average of 13.1 years ago. Taken together, these figures provide some evidence of enduring organizational identification within the survey sample.

**Measurement Model**

Using Amos (Arbuckle, 2007), I employed CFA procedures to develop and test the measurement model, which encompassed the theorized relationships between the latent constructs in the model and the specific variables that were expected to measure them. While most of the latent variables in the model were estimated as unidimensional in nature, the core construct of organizational identification was expected to be comprised of the three interrelated dimensions outlined in Chapter 3: self-categorization centrality, positivity of evaluation and security of attachment bonds.

Since prior research has traditionally measured organizational identification as a unitary construct (e.g. Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), I first tested a measurement model in which all organizational identification items loaded on a single latent construct. I then assessed support for a second-order factor model, in which each item loaded on one of three dimensions, each of which loaded on the higher-level construct of organizational identification. Finally, I tested a reduced model, in which two items with standardized factor loadings below .50 were removed. Consistent with Cameron’s (2004) initial work with this scale, I consulted the modification indices to identify means by which the model’s fit could be improved. I allowed the standard error
terms of several measures to be correlated in situations where they shared some underlying measurement property, such as similar phrasing or language. Three additional items were removed in the third model following consultation of the modification indices due to their notable loadings on multiple latent constructs in the model. This final reduced model thus includes 13 of the 18 items included in first two measurement models.

Table 8 summarizes a series of goodness-of-fit indices that were consulted to assess the fit of the three measurement models for the organizational identification construct to the data. While the $\chi^2$ statistic has been used historically to assess fit, it represents an exceptionally conservative measure that is particularly sensitive to sample size (Burt, 1973; Hu & Bentler, 1995). The large sample size in this dissertation has thus likely produced inflated $\chi^2$ values. Given this limitation, researchers have recommended the use of the relative chi-square value (Carmines & McIver, 1981; Nenkov, Inman & Hulland, 2008; Strathman, Gleicher, Boninger & Edwards., 1994), which is measured as $\chi^2$ divided by the degrees of freedom. Researchers have suggested that relative chi-square values under 5 are indicative of an adequate fit of the model to the data (Bollen, 1989a).
Hu & Bentler (1995) recommended the use of multiple indices in interpreting model fit. In addition to the relative chi-square statistic, Table 8 (and all subsequent model fit analyses) includes four additional model fit indices, which were selected due to their relative resistance to sample size effects. First, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger & Lind, 1980) assesses how well “the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter values, [would] fit the population covariance matrix if it were available” (Browne & Cudeck, 1993: 137-138). RMSEA values of .06 or lower have generally been interpreted as evidence of good model fit with the data (Byrne, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999). I also examined the confirmatory fit index (CFI; Bentler 1990), the relative fit index (RFI; Bollen, 1986) and the incremental fit index (IFI; Bollen, 1989b). For all three of these indices, values of .95 or greater are traditionally recognized as indicating good fit (Byrne, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 8 indicates that the reduced tridimensional model of organizational identification best fits the data. While the relative chi-square statistic for this model

<table>
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<th>3 Factors Correlated (Reduced model)</th>
<th>3 Factors Correlated</th>
<th>Unidimensional</th>
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<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>438.90</td>
<td>1378.85</td>
<td>2494.34</td>
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<td>df</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2/df$</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>10.45</td>
<td>18.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta \chi^2$</td>
<td>2055.44***</td>
<td>939.95***</td>
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<td>RMSEA</td>
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<td>.10</td>
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<td>.90</td>
<td>.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
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<td>.88</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

***: $p<.001$; $\Delta \chi^2$ values represent improvement of model fit over unidimensional model
slightly exceeds the range proposed by Bollen (1989a), the RMSEA value of .95 and CFI and IFI values of .96 suggest good fit of the model to the data. The RFI value of .94 is slightly below the recommended value of .95, but it exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of .90 commonly applied in prior studies (e.g. Cameron, 2004; Cable & Judge, 1997). In addition, the reduced model demonstrates statistically significant improvement in the chi-square value over the unidimensional model, which offers further support for retaining this model (Nenkov et al., 2008).

Table 9 presents the CFA results for the other scales included in the model, including participation in sustenance activities, perceived legacy identity strength, NOID, and positive affectivity. In all cases, the results provided compelling evidence of good model fit. Further, the chi-square values for both the perceived organizational identity strength and NOID scales were nonsignificant, indicating that “the implied theoretical model significantly reproduces the sample variance-covariance relationships in the matrix” (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004: 100).
Table 9
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results – Additional Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sustenance Activities</th>
<th>Perceived Organizational Identity Strength</th>
<th>NOID</th>
<th>Positive Affectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Scale Items</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>130.06</td>
<td>1.93*</td>
<td>2.90*</td>
<td>221.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$/df</td>
<td>7.65</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>11.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*: $p > .05$

Structural Model

Following the assessment of the measurement model, I developed the structural model, in which I tested the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs. I also included two directly measured variables, which were used to assess support for Hypotheses 4a and 4b, in the structural model. As noted earlier, I used the bootstrap procedure to address issues of nonnormality in the distribution of the data. Table 10 presents the results of the bootstrap analysis\(^6\). Drawing on this analysis, I followed procedures recommended by Byrne (2001) to determine whether nonnormality in the data has unduly influenced the calculation of parameters through maximum likelihood estimation.

---

\(^6\) Due to the large number of measures in this study, only the paths among the latent variables are reported in this table. All estimates among the latent variables and their associated measures were examined and met the criteria outlined by Byrne (2001).
First, I compared the standard errors produced using the bootstrap estimation procedure. The final column in Table 10, which is labeled “SE Difference,” indicates the difference between the standard errors produced through these two estimation procedures. In each case, the bootstrap procedure yielded extremely small decreases in the standard error values, which suggests that the ML estimates are not unduly influenced by nonnormality (Byrne, 2001). Second, Amos provided the standard errors of the standard error terms produced through bootstrap estimation, which are labeled “SE-SE” in Table 10. Consistent with Byrne’s (2001) criteria, these values are also very small. Taken together, both of these tests provided evidence that analysis of the structural model using ML estimates would not be substantially biased by nonnormal distribution of the data. I thus proceeded with analysis of the structural model using the ML estimates.

**Hypothesis Tests**

I assessed support for the hypotheses that were introduced in Chapter 4 of this dissertation by examining the statistical significance of the path coefficients in the structural model. This structural model is summarized in Figure 5. To review,
Identification was considered to be enduring when it remained strong after an organizational death.

**Figure 5: Summary of Structural Model 1**

***: p < .001; **: p < .01. Reported estimates are standardized.

**Antecedents and Effects of Sustenance Activities** The first three hypotheses in the theoretical model examined the relationship among organizational identification endurance, former members’ participation in sustenance activities and the perceived strength of an organization’s legacy identity. Hypothesis 1 predicted a positive relationship between the endurance of individuals’ organizational identification and level of participation in sustenance activities. The structural model output indicated a significant, positive relationship between these variables (β = .45, p < .001), which indicates support for this hypothesis. This finding suggests that the endurance of members’ identification with their organization influences the degree to which they participate in sustenance activities associated with post-death organizing.

Hypothesis 2 predicted a positive relationship between individuals’ participation in sustenance activities and the perceived strength of their organization’s legacy
organizational identity. The path between these two variables in the structural model was positive and significant (β=.10, p<.01), indicating supporting for Hypothesis 2. Former organizational members’ participation in sustenance activities may thus partly explain the strength of their perceptions about their organization’s legacy identity.

Hypothesis 3, which proposed a positive relationship between the endurance of members’ identification and perceptions of a strong legacy organizational identity, was also supported (β=.73, p<.001). These results indicate support for a direct relationship between organizational identification endurance and perceived strength of legacy organizational identity.

**Antecedents to Organizational Identification Endurance**  The remaining hypotheses examined the relationships of several proposed antecedents with the endurance of organizational identification. Hypothesis 4, which examined the relationship between individuals’ exposure to sustained organizational success and identification endurance, was assessed through two subsidiary hypotheses. Hypothesis 4a proposed a positive relationship between former members’ length of service and the endurance of their organizational identification. The structural model results indicated a significant, positive relationship between these variables (β=.15, p<.001), which indicates support for Hypothesis 4a. This finding suggests that former employees who worked for an organization for longer periods of time remain more identified with their organization after it dies than individuals with shorter tenures.

Hypothesis 4b tested the relationship between the percent of an individual’s employed years that were characterized by growth with the endurance of organizational identification. While a positive relationship was expected, the results indicated a reverse
relationship that was statistically significant ($\beta = -.06$, $p < .01$). Former employees whose employment periods were more characterized by declining employment levels and financial losses appeared more likely to remain more identified with their organization after it had died. Given this unexpected relationship, I further explored this effect through post-hoc analysis, which I will discuss following the presentation of the remaining hypotheses and review of the overall model fit.

Hypothesis 5 examined the relationship between perceptions of a relational organizational identity orientation and the endurance of organizational identification. The results indicated support for a positive, significant relationship between the variables ($\beta = .11$, $p < .001$), which provides support for this hypothesis. Perceptions of organizational identity orientation that are more relational in nature were positively related with organizational identification endurance.

The remaining two hypotheses examined the relationship of two personal traits and organizational identification endurance. Hypothesis 6 proposed a positive relationship between NOID and the endurance of organizational identification. As expected, the results of the structural model indicated a positive, significant relationship ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$), which provided support for Hypothesis 6. Former members who indicated higher levels of NOID were more likely to demonstrate more enduring organizational identification than individuals with lower levels of NOID.

Finally, Hypothesis 7 assessed the relationship between positive affectivity and the endurance of organizational identification. The results indicated a positive and statistically significant relationship between these variables ($\beta = .62$, $p < .001$), which provides support for Hypothesis 7. Higher levels of positive affectivity were positively
related with organizational identification endurance. The support for Hypotheses 6 and 7 are consistent with the findings in Kreiner & Ashforth’s (2004) study, which examined the relationship of NOID and positive affect with patterns of identification within intact organizations.

**Overall Model Fit**

In addition to testing individual relationships among constructs, SEM procedures allow researchers to assess the overall fit of structural models with the data. Consistent with the assessment of the measurement model, the fit of the structural model should be judged through the examination of multiple goodness-of-fit indices (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Table 11 presents the fit statistics for the structural model that was illustrated in Figure 5, under the column labeled “Structural Model 1” as well as two subsequent models that will be discussed in the next section. While the chi-square statistic was nonsignificant, other fit indices, which are less sensitive to sample size, offered evidence of good model fit with the data. The relative chi-square statistic, which controls for large sample size by taking into account the degrees of freedom in the model, was within the range associated with good model fit (Bollen, 1989a). The RMSEA value .03 and the CFI and IFI values of .95 were within the ranges to which researchers generally ascribe strong model fit (Byrne, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The RFI value of .92 was “close to .95 indicating superior fit” (Byrne, 2001: 83). In sum, the overall model fit statistics, together with 7 of the 8 path coefficients that were statistically significant, suggest that the hypothesized model fits well with the data.
TABLE 11
Overall Model Fit of Structural Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Model</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$</td>
<td>1810.6</td>
<td>1892.5</td>
<td>2049.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$/df</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFI</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-hoc Analyses

While this first structural model met many of the criteria by which researchers assess model fit, I developed two additional structural models to assess two further issues. In the second structural model, I further examined Hypothesis 4a, which was not supported in the first model, by including a variable that measured the length of time since an individual left DEC. In the third structural model, I included age, which has been found to be positively related to organizational identification strength in prior studies and was substantially correlated with both the % growth years (H4a) and length of service (H4b) variables, as a control variable. The overall model fit statistics for both of these models are summarized in Table 11. I now examine each of these models in turn.

**Model 2** In the first structural model, the percentage of employed years marked by organizational success was negatively and significantly related to the endurance of an individual’s organizational identification. This finding suggests that individuals whose periods of employment were more marked by decline remained more strongly identified
with the organization on average than individuals whose tenure more closely overlapped with its “glory years.” One plausible explanation for this finding can be derived from prior research on organizational decline and death. When organizations enter periods of decline, reduced resource and employment levels typically produce more complex and expansive work roles for remaining employees (Mone, McKinley & Barker, 1998; Weitzel & Jonsson, 1989). Sutton (1987) found that work effort increased following an announcement of organizational death, and this increased task involvement may further strengthen members’ identification with their organizations.

The means by which the % growth years variable was calculated suggests another possible explanation of this effect. This variable was based on an assessment of those years in which DEC reported declining employment levels and/or negative profit figures. All of these years corresponded with the final ten years of DEC’s existence (1989-1998), which suggests that the negative relationship between % growth years and organizational identification may be the result of the possible tapering of organizational identification over time. Specifically, former members’ identification may become less strong as more years transpire following their departures from their organizations. To examine this possible effect, I included an additional measure, which represents the number of years since an individual last worked at DEC, in the second structural model. As previously reported in Table 1, the mean value for this variable is 13.1 years with a standard deviation of 4.2 years.
Figure 6 summarizes the results of the second structural model. The variable labeled “years gone,” which measures the number of years since an individual last worked for DEC, has a significant, negative relationship with organizational identification endurance. When this variable is included in the model, the relationship of the % growth years variable and organizational identification endurance turns positive but is no longer significant.

The negative relationship of the years gone variable with organizational identification does suggest a possible tapering effect. However, this relationship is relatively mild; the mean score on the items comprising the three organizational identification scales was 4.18 (out of 5) for individuals who reported leaving DEC 10-15 years ago compared to 4.10 for individuals who left 20 or more years ago. While identification strength appears to be higher among more recent employees, the overall

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**Figure 6: Summary of Structural Model 2**

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For presentational clarity, only correlations involving newly introduced exogenous variables are reported in the representations of the second and third structural model.
level of identification remains quite positive among individuals who have not worked for DEC in more than two decades. The cross-sectional data used in this study also does not enable conclusions about the effects of lapsed time on organizational identification. Given Sutton’s (1987) findings, it is certainly conceivable that organizational identification among earlier cohorts was always less strong than among members who worked during later periods, which were more characterized by decline. The second structural model thus offers inconclusive support for a hypothesized relationship between exposure to sustained success and the endurance of organizational identification.

Table 11 presents the overall model fit statistics for this model in the column labeled “Structural Model 2.” The fit statistics for this model were very similar to those produced for the first model.

**Model 3** As noted earlier, I expected that age would be positively related to organizational identification endurance. Further, in the previous chapter, I identified a substantial correlation between age and both measures of exposure to sustained success. As previously reported, the % growth years variable did not have a significant relationship with organizational identification in the second structural model. However, Hypothesis 4b, which assessed the relationship between length of service and organizational identification endurance, was significant in the first and second structural model. I ran a final structural model, which is represented in Figure 7, to assess the relationship of length of service with organizational identification endurance while controlling for age. As can be seen in Figure 7, Hypothesis 4b remains significant (β=.15, p<.05) when age is included in the model.
Figure 7 also indicates that the negative relationship between the years gone variable and organizational identification endurance is no longer significant when controlling for age. These results suggest an inconclusive relationship between the years since individuals were employed and the endurance of their organizational identification. Table 11 provides a summary of the goodness-of-fit indices for this model in the column labeled “Structural Model 3.” These values are consistent with those of the first two structural models.

**Statistical assessment of common method bias** In addition to the design procedures reviewed in the prior chapter, I also employed the single-specific-method-factor procedure to assess and control for possible common method variance bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; cf. Williams & Anderson, 1994). This procedure estimates method bias associated with a common factor and controls for measurement error by allowing measured variables to load on both their theorized construct and a latent variable that is suspected to cause method bias. If factor loadings remain statistically
significant with the inclusion of these dual loadings, Podsakoff et al. (2003) suggests that the suspected factor has not produced substantial common method bias.

Two particularly common sources of method bias include social desirability and positive affectivity (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Given that the survey was completed anonymously, it is unlikely that social desirability bias would influence participants’ responses (Nederhof, 1985). Further, in the context of post-death organizing, social desirability bias is less likely to have influenced respondents, who were answering questions about an organization in which they were no longer employed and has not existed in over ten years. However, positive affectivity might have encouraged respondents to consistently agree with statements related to different constructs in the survey instrument, thus causing common method bias. Since positive affectivity was explicitly measured in the survey for this study⁸, I used the single-common-factor procedure to assess the extent to which it influenced the relationships among some of the constructs in the model. I conducted this analysis on the relationships among the three identity-related constructs included in the model: NOID, organizational identification endurance and legacy organizational identity strength. These relationships, which are represented in Hypotheses 3 and 6, were at particular risk to be affected by common method bias given that these three constructs were all theoretically related to the higher-order identity construct and measured using a common likert scale format (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

⁸ In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to evaluate the extent to which they experienced each positive affective state “when they think about DEC.” These instructions were intended to orient respondents towards their relatively more generalized affective experience of the DEC organizational context instead of their current affect (Barrett & Russell, 1998) at the time of the survey.
Figures 8 and 9 summarize the results of the single-method-factor procedure. It is important to note that positive affectivity was not represented as a latent variable in the first of the two models that were run in conjunction with this procedure. Figure 8 presents the initial model, in which NOID is posited to be positively related with organizational identification endurance, which is also expected to positively related with Figure 9 depicts the second model, in which each of the measured variables associated with the three latent constructs were also represented as indicators of positive affectivity. If the path coefficients in this second model became nonsignificant, Podsakoff et al. (2003) suggest that positive affectivity may have caused common method bias and overstated the relationships observed in the first model. However, as Figure 9 shows, when the measured variables for NOID, organizational identification and legacy organizational identity strength also load on the latent construct for positive affectivity, the factor loadings for the two paths associated with Hypotheses 3 and 6 decrease in size but remain statistically significant. These results suggest that common method bias has not unduly influenced the results.

**Figure 8: Single-method-factor Procedure Results without Positive Affectivity**

![Diagram of Figure 8](image)
Figure 9: Single-method-factor Procedure Results with Positive Affectivity
CHAPTER 7
DISCUSSION

This dissertation provided an initial examination of the causes of post-death organizing by demonstrating the role of the enduring organizational identification as an individual-level generative mechanism that gives rise to a strong sense of an organizational legacy as well as the collective behaviors through which former organizational members sustain valued elements of organizational life. This research has also delineated several antecedent factors that can explain why organizational identification endures, or remains strong in the wake of organizational death. I briefly review and expand on these results before discussing the theoretical and practical implications of this research.

Overview of Results

Drawing on an expanded operationalization of organizational identification, I tested and largely supported a model that explains its role in post-death organizing. Specifically, the endurance of organizational identification was found to be positively related to members’ participation in sustenance activities, through which members collectively carry forward valued organizational elements in new generations of “successor” organizations. Further, identification endurance was positively related with the perceived strength of a legacy organizational identity. Participation in sustenance activities was also positively related to perceptions of legacy organizational identity strength, which suggests that members’ involvement in activities that preserve valued elements of a defunct organization keep its central and distinctive characteristics (Albert & Whetten, 1985) prominent in their minds. Sustenance activities provide a collective
This research also explores some of the antecedent factors to organizational identification endurance. Two personal characteristics, NOID and positive affectivity, were found to be positively related with the endurance of organizational identification. While both of these factors have been previously found to relate to identification with intact organizations (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004), the results suggest they also influence the extent to which members continue identifying with defunct entities. These findings point to the particularly durable influence of NOID and positive affect on individuals’ patterns of identification with organizations in which they are no longer active members. As facilitators of secure attachment bonds, these personal characteristics likely serve as impeding forces that decelerate processes of deidentification, which may be desired or actively encouraged by organizational leaders in such contexts (cf. Fiol, 2002; Pratt, 2000). Secure attachment bonds are particularly resilient in the face of separation from attachment figures (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1973), and individuals’ departure from an organizational context would be unlikely to lead them to sever their personal connections to it. The high need for social inclusion associated with high levels of NOID and the optimistic orientation associated with positive affect would encourage such securely attached individuals to find ways to incorporate their defunct organizations in their ongoing patterns of living instead of walking away from them (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Glynn, 1998; Klass et al., 1996).
The positive relationship between length of service and organizational identification endurance suggests that identification takes root over time and becomes particularly resistant to change among organizational veterans. In long service members, identification may take on a “deep structure” (Rousseau, 1998: 221), “which does not depend on situational cues and…is sustained across situations and roles.” For long service members, their periods of employment occupy large, if not majority, shares of their lifespans. As one informant, who now works for a DEC spinoff company, told me in a prior qualitative study, “I’m 60 years old right now, I worked for DEC for 30 years. It’s hard to remember when I wasn’t a DEC employee.” The prospect of shedding identification with an organization, in which so much of one’s personal life history is bound up, would likely provoke an individual-level experience of “identity dissonance,” or a discrepancy between prior and current understandings of their own social identities (cf. Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). To restore cognitive consistency with their past, such individuals would be particularly motivated to affirm the validity and valor of their social identities.

The extent to which individuals ascribed relational identity orientations to their organizations was also positively related to the endurance of their organizational identification. When individuals perceived their organizations as relationally oriented, they more or less explicitly subscribed to an indefinite, trust-laden exchange relationship (Rousseau, 1995). These relationships, and their resilience over time, reflect the formation of secure attachment bonds associated with enduring organizational identification. Attachment theory suggests that such bonds will remain intact when individuals are separated from their attachment figures and will continue to guide and
shape behavioral patterns over time (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Klass et al., 1996).

Further, while variables measured at the level of individual perceptions do not offer sufficient evidence to draw conclusions about organizational effects, this finding does suggest that relationally-oriented organizations may be particularly likely to engender identification endurance. An aggregation of the results of the Ten Statements Test indicated that positively-valenced, relationally-oriented statements comprised the largest share (44%) of responses\(^9\) from former DEC employees, who as a group, still demonstrated a very positive and strong sense of identification with DEC ten years after it had died.

Lastly, the findings offered inconclusive support for a positive relationship between the extent to which individuals’ worked for DEC in years characterized by organizational success and organizational identification endurance. In addition, the second and third structural models offered disconfirming evidence of a negative relationship between the % growth years and organizational identification variables. Former employees demonstrated comparably enduring organizational identification whether they worked for DEC during its long-running growth period or its last ten years of poor performance.

Given the plausible arguments for both positive and negative relationships between these variables that have been presented in this dissertation, it is certainly conceivable that employees who worked during periods of success remain comparably identified with DEC to those who were members in decline cycles, albeit for different reasons. The attractive identities and sharing of particularistic rewards found in rapidly growing organizations (Dutton et al., 1994; Rousseau, 1998), as well as the increased

\(^9\) The numerator for this calculation excluded any statements that were assigned two codes.
work involvement and commitment required in periods of decline, may each foster tight
couplings of individuals’ identities with their organizations. Further research based on a
longitudinal study design may provide an opportunity to better understand the effects of
changing organizational performance on identification endurance over time.

Theoretical Implications

This research offers several theoretical contributions to the identification
literature. This dissertation revisited the role of evaluation and affect envisioned in
Tajfel’s (1978) initial representation of social identity theory that has served as the basis
for contemporary research on organizational identification (e.g. Ashforth & Mael, 1989;
Pratt, 2001; Elsbach, 1999; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Existing theories (e.g. Dutton et al.,
1994; Elsbach, 1999) and measures (Mael & Ashforth, 1989) of organizational
identification have given almost exclusive attention to the cognition-driven perceptions
underlying members’ identification with their organizations. This research draws on
advances in identification research in social psychology to develop an understanding of
the important role of evaluative and affective processes underlying organizational
identification and the means by which they influence its endurance. This tridimensional
perspective on organizational identification makes more transparent the diverse motives
underlying former members’ efforts to sustain the situational cues from which they
derived their identification. While these three dimensions are certainly closely related, a
broader conceptualization and operationalization of organizational identification affords a
means to more fully understand the nature of members’ experienced relationships with
their organizations and the ways in which these patterns influence their behavior.
This broader conceptualization also resolves a paradox underlying the endurance of organizational identification. Rousseau (1998) suggested that organizational identification may remain deep-seated even as the situational cues from which it was derived fade, such as may happen following organizational death or job loss. However, the strongly identified former members who participate in sustenance activities preserve those same situational cues on which they based their identification through their collective efforts. This research suggests that, once formed, organizational identification does not depend on situational cues, but instead reinvigorates them. Experiences of organizational death produce a broad range of motives for sustenance activities among former organizational members. Sustenance activities satiate the needs of individuals with enduring organizational identification to preserve cognitive consistency with their past, to affirm the positive character of their organizations’ identities and to mourn their lost attachment figures. As they participate in these collective efforts, former organizational members sustain valued elements of organizational life that embody their original bases of their organizational identification.

This research also advances scholarly understanding of the dynamics of organizational identification continuity. The means by which organizations facilitate changes in members’ patterns of identification within an intact organization are well understood (e.g. Pratt, 2000). For instance, Fiol (2002) described a process by which organizations loosen members’ ties to a strongly held organizational identity in order to foster reidentification with a new, desired organizational identity.

What extant research has not addressed is what happens to members’ organizational identification when they no longer construe a tangible organizational
identity with which to identify. Researchers have studied the effects of mergers on identification, but have exclusively focused on explaining members’ new patterns of identification with an acquiring firm (Bartels, Douwes, de Jong & Pruyn, 2006; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Monden & de Lima, 2002). These studies have left unexamined individuals’ residual identification with a prior organizational identity. However, in cases of merger-induced organizational death, former members may resist identifying with an acquiring firm (e.g. Ullrich, Wieseke & van Dick, 2005). Taken together, most of these studies tacitly assumed that organizational identification tracks with membership status. This dissertation suggests that members’ identification may outlast the organizations on which it is based and generate new cycles of organizing.

Through its focus on the context of post-death organizing, this research illuminates the dynamics of identification with dead organizational entities and its influence on processes of identification maintenance. By participating in sustenance activities, individuals express and reinforce their enduring organizational identification with their defunct organizations. Rather than passively submitting to leaders’ efforts to foster deidentification, former organizational members may actively manage their existing patterns of organizational identification, thus allowing it to persist as individuals move to new organizational settings. This research suggests that the endurance of organizational identification generates from dialectic processes in which leaders’ efforts to manage multiple organizational identities and members’ identification with them are tightly entwined with members’ efforts to sustain the relational, symbolic or behavioral bases on which their organizational identification is based (Bartunek, 1984; Carador & Pratt, 2006; Fiol, 2002; Pratt & Foreman, 2000). Sustenance activities legitimize and
bolster members’ continued identification with a prior organization, thus providing a countervailing force to leaders’ efforts to manage patterns of identification in new organizational contexts.

By demonstrating the relationship between organizational identification endurance and participation in sustenance activities, this dissertation initiates an examination of the factors underlying former members’ involvement in post-death organizing. The endurance of individuals’ identification motivates their participation in collective efforts to sustain valued elements of organizational life. Given that post-death organizing is a social phenomenon, its prevalence and reach depends on the extent to which former members maintain a sense of identification after an organization closes. Post-death organizing will be unlikely to take root among former members of a defunct organization if they have collectively cast off their sense of identification following organizational death.

The specific direction that post-death organizing takes would likely vary in different contexts based on the bases from which members derived their identification. In this dissertation, I examined the efforts of former members of DEC to sustain their relationships through participation in alumni associations around the world. Former members’ interest in such groups owes to the relational bases through with DEC instilled their identification. For individuals and contexts in which symbolic and behavioral bases of identification are more salient, post-death organizing will likely be primarily oriented towards sustaining artifacts and roles, respectively.

This research on post-death organizing also clarifies the relationship between individuals’ organizational membership and behavioral intentions. With few exceptions
(Hoetker & Agarwal, 2007), prior research has suggested that former members reorient their behavior towards new organizational environments after an organization dies (Duckles, et al. 2005; Harris & Sutton, 1986; Sutton, 1987). For instance, Sutton (1987) examined the efforts of departing members to find new jobs at other organizations following the conclusion of disbanding activities. These findings suggest that individuals behave in ways that are consistent with, and oriented towards, organizations in which they construe active membership.

However, the context of post-death organizing suggests that individuals may continue to act in terms of defunct organizations in which they no longer see themselves as active members. By explaining the role of organizational identification in members’ participation in post-death organizing, this dissertation provides a means to understand why individuals may continue behaving in ways that do not reflect their extant organizational affiliations. Drawing on Tajfel and Turner’s (1985) articulation of social identity theory, Ashforth and Mael (1989: 25) wrote that “individuals tend to choose activities congruent with salient aspects of their identities, and they support the institutions embodying those identities.” For individuals with enduring organizational identification, the persistent salience of a defunct organization within their social identities predisposes them to act in terms of it instead of, or perhaps in addition to, other organizations in which members may construe active membership and yet occupy less central roles in their self-concepts. This dissertation’s findings suggest that relaxing assumptions of a tight coupling of individuals’ organizational membership and behavior may afford opportunities for more robust theorizing about the function, composition and
effects of individuals’ social identities, which may be more centered on past affiliations than current ones.

This research also sheds light on the provenance and perpetuation of organizational legacies. Organizational research has increasingly demonstrated a concern and interest in organizational legacies (Burton & Beckman, 2007; Schein, 2003; Wade-Benzoni, 2006; Walsh & Glynn, 2008), which may be best understood as shared understandings of an organization’s historic contributions (Walsh & Bartunek, 2008). While the functions and effects of legacies have become clear from prior research, their causes have received relatively less attention from scholars. This research addresses this gap by recognizing the role of members’ enduring identification with a defunct organization in the perpetuation and fortitude of an organization’s legacy. The degree to which a robust legacy “survives” a defunct organization owes to the continued enactment of members’ organizational identification that puts forth and spreads contemporary interpretations about prior organizational life. The endurance of organizational identification provides a collective reservoir of energy for shared sensemaking processes (Maitlis, 2005; Bartunek, Huang & Walsh, 2008) that translate organizational memory (Walsh & Ungson, 1991) into contemporary understandings of legacy, which are broadly promoted among former members and interested outsiders. These memories would likely remain mostly personal, and thus likely to fade over time, in the absence of sustenance activities, which provide a collective forum for the interpersonal exchange and reflections on past experience that become the basis for these collective conceptions of an organization’s legacy. While non-participants in post-death organizing may hold strong perceptions of an organization’s legacy, their continued awareness and contemporary
interpretations of their defunct organizations are certainly influenced by the presence of a core group of participants in post-death organizing. Through their collective efforts, such individuals create an environment for forming and perpetuating interpretations of an organization’s legacy, which are projected to widening circles of former members and interested outsiders.

**Practical Implications**

As the recent wave of corporate bankruptcies and mergers makes evident, organizational death impacts contemporary organizations on an increasingly frequent basis. This research has implications for organizational leaders who are preparing for organizational death. Organizational death prompts a notable degree of sadness among organizational members (cf. Shepherd, 2003; Sutton, 1987), and these feelings are ultimately resolved through the preservation of valued organizational elements. Not all members of dying organizations will share these concerns. Some organizational members may demonstrate little interest in sustaining elements of organizational life, and the painful emotions commonly associated with organizational decline (Cameron, Whetten & Kim, 1986) may lead others to actively object to such efforts. This research may help managers to hone in on those employees whose identification is likely to endure and thus be particularly interested in post-death organizing.

Specifically, these results suggest that long service employees may be particularly inclined to continue identifying with an organization after it dies, and leaders might benefit from giving careful consideration to the specific elements of organizational life in which these veterans grounded their identification. Managers of dying organizations may plan more acceptable deaths by recognizing the durability of members’
identification and their interests in sustainability. Leaders who attune themselves to what members most value about an organization are in a position to defuse these negative emotions by encouraging and sponsoring post-death organizing as part of their closing plans. For instance, leaders might consider planning alumni associations or permanent museum exhibits in conjunction with plans to close an organizational entity. The recognition and intentional commemoration of valued organizational elements may defuse resistance to organizational death among remaining members and prevent a protracted stalemate comparable to a permanently failing organization (Meyer & Zucker, 1989). As many organizational deaths take place within the boundaries or larger parent organizations, the prevalence of enduring organizational identification, and the concerns for preservation it engenders, may be of notable concern to leaders of any organizations planning to close a subunit or acquire an outside firm.

More broadly, this research has implications for managers of intact organizations that are not involved in experiences of organizational death. As survivors of organizational death join new organizations, they bring with them prior patterns of identification that shape their subsequent behavior. Further, managers in subsequent contexts may be unaware of these pre-existing identification patterns unless they explicitly inquire about them. These findings suggest that it is particularly important for managers to be familiar with their employees’ prior work histories and to gauge the extent to which they continue to identify with those organizations in which they were formerly members. Enduring patterns of organizational identification that are not compatible with a new work environment may trigger an “intractable identity conflict”
(Fiol, Pratt & O’Connor, 2009), requiring managers to pursue rigorous sensebreaking tactics that facilitate deidentification (Pratt, 2000).

**Limitations and Areas for Future Research**

The design of the study for this dissertation presents several limitations that constrain interpretation of its findings. First, the survey data used in this study were cross-sectional in nature, which prevents any definitive conclusions about causality in the relationships in the theoretical model. However, prior research suggests that many of the studied constructs emerge in a temporal sequence that implies an untested causal ordering. For instance, members generally become strongly identified with an organization while it is intact, while participation in post-death organizing occurs after an organization has died. Therefore, post-death organizing likely reinforces pre-existing patterns of organizational identification, rather than causing it in the first place.

Additionally, prior research on identification and attachment suggest that individuals’ levels of NOID (Glynn, 1998) and positive affectivity (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1990) are relatively stable over time and likely predate their participation in a specific organization. These traits are thus more likely to engender organizational identification than to result from it.

A research study that follows a longitudinal design would provide an opportunity to test the implied causal relationships in this model. In addition, such research offers an ideal context for studying the effects of changing organizational performance on members’ identification strength. While the results of this study demonstrated that organizational identification was strong among former employees who had left the organization an average of 13.1 years ago, the trajectory of identification strength over
time is unclear. A longitudinal study that assesses identification strength at different points in time could draw more firm conclusions about the presence and magnitude of a possible tapering effect in members’ patterns of organizational identification.

Second, while I employed multiple procedural and statistical controls to control the effects of common method variance, it is unlikely that the analyses in this study are completely unaffected by some degree of measurement error. Respondents provided the data for most of the measures in the theoretical model and used a single survey instrument. While the use of procedures recommended in prior research (e.g. Podsakoff et al., 2003) likely limited common method bias, additional data collection that involves multiple raters and instruments would improve the validity of conclusions about the relationships in the model. For instance, participation in sustenance activities could be jointly assessed by both individual members and the leaders of the alumni associations, or other organizations associated with post-death organizing in which former members are involved.

Finally, this study drew on the experiences of former employees of one defunct organization. While the high volume of responses to the survey certainly provided some degree of statistical power, this research does not provide a basis for making any claims about the generalizability of the findings. Distinctive, but unmeasured, characteristics of the DEC organizational context may produce effects that are not characteristic of organizations operating in different industries, economic conditions, geographic regions, or historical periods. Replication studies, in which the hypotheses that comprise the theoretical model underlying this study are tested with data drawn from a broader set of
defunct organizations, would provide useful reference points to assess the degree to
which these relationships are broadly applicable beyond the case of DEC.

This dissertation represents an initial exploration of the role of organizational
identification in post-death organizing. It opens up numerous avenues for future studies
that can advance scholarly understanding of these constructs. First, this research
introduced a three-part model of organizational identification that elaborates cognitive,
evaluative and affective processes underlying it. While this research has a produced a
finer-grained perspective on organizational identification, it does not represent a final
stage in the development of this complex construct. The confirmatory factor analysis
results provided support for a three-factor model of organizational identification, which
may involve additional dimensions or processes not examined in this research. As
Cameron (2004: 258) noted,

_The interpretation of [factor analysis] results can foster the illusion that the
dimensions are ‘‘discovered’’ while masking the role of the researcher in
selecting the initial items. Given that such ‘‘prestructuring’’ characterized the
approach taken in the present research—albeit with a grounding in prior
exploratory analyses and existing theory—the items inevitably do not represent
other conceivable dimensions of social identification. Thus, although the results
clearly show that the three-factor model performed better than the one- and two-
dimensional alternatives, they do not demonstrate that the model represents the
universe of social-identity-relevant dimensions._

Like many theoretical models, this three-factor model of organizational
identification may trade off some degree of accuracy in favor of its simplicity and
generalizability (Weick, 1979). It expands scholars’ understanding of the dynamics of
organizational identification, while leaving unexplored other potential elements of this
complex construct. Future research on organizational identification should further
examine its affective, cognitive, and evaluative characteristics and their
interrelationships. In particular, Ashforth (2001) suggests that identification may encompass a behavioral component, which has not been addressed in this dissertation.

Additional research that further unpacks the organizational identification construct offers an opportunity to better understand its role in, and beyond, organizational life.

This dissertation examined the role of organizational identification as an individual-level generative mechanism that explains former members’ propensity to participate in collective efforts to sustain valued elements of defunct organizations. Further, it developed and tested a model that specifically focused on individual traits and experiences as antecedents to organizational identification endurance. Future studies can build on this research by identifying higher-level antecedents to enduring organizational identification and participation in post-death organizing. Specifically, such work might address the interpersonal, organizational and institutional influences that cause individuals to remain strongly identified with defunct organizations and to participate in post-death organizing.

Future research on post-death organizing might also examine the more macro question of why some defunct organizations have robust “afterlives” while others fade into obscurity. For instance, the Studebaker Corporation has inspired a full generation of successor organizations, including its corporate museum and several spinoff companies. However, dozens of other automotive firms that closed during the twentieth century (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_defunct_United_States_automobile_manufacturers; accessed 12/16/08) have yielded negligible organizing efforts by former members. In addition to the prevalence of enduring identification among former organizational members, post-death organizing likely owes to higher-order
influences that were not examined in this study. Whetten (1987: 345) proposed that, “Multilevel studies of organizational morbidity would enable us to examine in fine grained detail the causes of changes in the size and composition of populations of organizations, as well as the aggregate impact of individual organizational processes.” Such multilevel modeling would also afford insight into broader range of forces that contribute to the instigation and perpetuation of post-death organizing, thus enabling more robust theorizing about its causes, processes, and effects.

This dissertation specifically examined the phenomenon of post-death organizing from the vantage point of the defunct organization that is commemorated through former members’ activities. However, when an organization dies, most former members will join one or more new organizations (cf. Sutton, 1987), such as a new employer or nonprofit association. Those individuals who have enduring identification with an organization in which they were previously involved will likely bring it with them into these new organizing environments. The effects of enduring organizational identification and participation in post-death organizing on individuals’ performance and experience in subsequent work environments remains unclear. Their affinity and concern for a defunct organization may make them more inclined to share its tacit and explicit knowledge in their new organization (Hoetker & Agarwal, 2007), thus making them particularly effective partners for organizational knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994). On the other hand, their enduring identification could serve as a barrier to identification with their new organizations, producing “divided loyalties” (Rockmann, Pratt, & Northcraft, 2007) that impede interpersonal interactions. A qualitative study that explores former employees’ experiences in new workplaces and the nature of their relationships with new co-workers,
offers an opportunity to better understand the effects of enduring identification and participation in post-death organizing on performance and satisfaction in subsequent work environments.

This research suggests that members with enduring organizational identification continue to perceive a strong organizational identity. The context of post-death organizing offers an opportunity to advance the ongoing debate about the endurance of organizational identity (e.g. Gioia, et al., 2000; Whetten, 2006). In this study, participants collectively construed a fairly strong organizational identity even though DEC has not existed as a tangible entity in over a decade. The perceived strength of an organizational identity beyond formal organizational life suggests that it does not irrevocably inhere in an organization itself. However, as noted earlier, such legacy identities may not demonstrate true persistence when they evoke inauthentic memories of “who we were as an organization” (Loftus & Hoffman, 1989; Walsh & Glynn, 2008). Future studies that employ archival sources and contemporary qualitative data to track the evolution or stability of an organizational identity throughout and beyond an organization’s lifespan offer an opportunity to clarify the dynamics of organizational identity change. In addition, such research would illuminate how experiences of organizational death fortify, weaken or transform these processes.
The acquisition of DEC signaled an end of an era to many watchers of the computing industry (e.g. Morrison, 1998). While Compaq’s CEO assured DEC’s employees that the acquisition “is really a beginning, not an end,” (Pfeiffer, 1998:2), few employees would argue with Schein’s (2003) that DEC is today an unquestionably defunct entity. However, ten years later, DEC’s legacy remains robust, in large part due to the concerted effort of its former members to sustain valued organizational elements through post-death organizing. DEC pioneered not only the minicomputing industry but also a cultural style that continues to serve as a model for contemporary organizations (Yost, 2005). Ten years after it died, DEC’s continued influence in the business community owes to the strongly-held emotions and judgments about these organizations among former employees whose identification with DEC has endured even as DEC itself has not.

Former DEC employees have gone on to serve in leadership positions at other large firms and in their own startup ventures, bringing with them a “shared history…a shared memory, perhaps even a shared ideal, [that exists] among thousands of company veterans” (Earls, 2004: 120). Through post-death organizing, DEC employees have opened up this shared history to future generations of scholars and practitioners. As Schein (2003:268) reflected, “So DEC lives on…as one of the prime examples of what is possible in the human and technical arena…It remains to be seen whether the DEC model will be reproduced in the…organizations of the future.” The opportunity for the DEC business model to resurface owes in great part to the post-death organizing of its strongly
identified former employees, whose concerted efforts have sustained the organization’s legacy for future generations of scholars and practitioners.

In my dissertation research, I have attempted to explain the social and psychological dynamics underlying former members’ participation in post-death organizing. This research has shed light on the processes and components of organizational identification in an effort to explain its endurance in circumstances when it would traditionally be expected to fade. In the turbulent economic conditions pervading the global business environment, the experiences of former employees of DEC offer useful lessons for contemporary organizations, which increasingly confront the prospect of death. By inviting researchers and managers’ closer scrutiny of the endurance of organizational identification, it is my hope that the contribution of this dissertation also endures over time by spurring advances in scholarly conversations and managerial practice.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION PROFILE

Digital Equipment Corporation (henceforth DEC) was founded in 1957 by Ken Olsen and Harlan Anderson, two engineers who had been working at MIT’s Lincoln Laboratory. Olsen and Anderson sought funding for their new business from American Research & Development, a venture capital firm headed by Georges Doriot, who was a former dean of the Harvard Business School. Doriot committed $70,000 in funding to Olsen and Anderson, cautioning them to reconsider developing computers, which at the time, were seen as an unprofitable line of business (Pearson, 1992). Olsen and Anderson thus substituted the word “equipment” for “computer in the company’s name (Yost, 2005) and turned their attention to designing and building logic modules, which were an integral component in computer manufacturing. Founded in Hudson, Massachusetts, Olsen and Anderson set up their new business in 8,680 square feet of space in a Civil War-era textile plant known as “The Mill,” which would become its longtime headquarters. By 1974, DEC would acquire and occupy all nineteen buildings on the Mill’s campus.

After a very successful first year, Doriot relented on his concerns about the computer business, and DEC quickly started development on its first computer product. The PDP-1, the first of which was sold in 1960, would become the first in a line of increasingly successful interactive computers that greatly changed the nature of computing. Until this 1960s, the computing industry was dominated by mainframe computers, which were large-scale machines that processed data in large “batches” by reading punch cards or magnetic tapes. The new style of interactive
computers, which DEC pioneered with its introduction of the PDP-1, were much smaller, lower cost, and, most importantly, directly accessible by users. These timesharing systems greatly increased the speed and accuracy of data processing and sold for a fraction of the cost of mainframe computers.

In 1965, DEC extended its product line with its introduction of the PDP-8, which was the first computer to harness the full power of integrated circuit technology at an extremely low price. DEC sold 800 PDP-8 systems within two years, making it the first commercially successful entrant in a minicomputer market that DEC pioneered and dominated for two decades. Its low cost and relatively high data processing capacity made computers more readily available beyond their traditional scientific and engineering applications to a wider range of users, including office workers. DEC capitalized on the success of its PDP-8 with a lucrative public stock offering in 1966, which yielded $4.8 million (Yost, 2005).

Increasing tensions between the two founders led Anderson to resign from DEC in 1966, leaving Olsen, who had served as president since the firm’s inception, firmly in control of the company (Rifkin & Harrar, 1988). Over time, Olsen would oversee the imprinting of several cultural values inside DEC’s work environment, which was rapidly growing and expanding around the world. Largely attributed to Ken Olsen’s religious and military background, DEC’s culture was founded on a series of principles best encapsulated by Schein (2003), who worked directly with Ken Olsen as a consultant for nearly three decades. DEC’s cultural system placed a definitive emphasis on personal responsibility, embodied in the pervasive catchphrases, “do the right thing” and “he who proposes, does.” In return for this personal commitment, employees were rewarded with
a strong (although unwritten) assurance of job security that was endemic of a paternalistic style of management that pervaded DEC’s culture. Finally, the matrix management style that characterized DEC’s structure for many years was founded on a belief in consensus-based decision making. Olsen firmly believed that internal conflict produced effective decisions and frequently fostered competition among DEC’s business units. For instance, in the early 1980s, DEC simultaneously funded three separate projects to develop its first personal computer.

While DEC would face short-term financial pressures during the recessionary period of the early 1970s, it continued to grow and remained profitable in the 1970s and through the mid-1980s. By the late 1970s, DEC’s manufacturing operations encompassed nearly 5,000,000 square feet of factory space and employed 17,500 people across North America, Europe and Asia (Digital Equipment Corporation, 1978). As DEC solidified its dominance of the minicomputer marketplace, it grew to become the second largest computer company in the world, trailing only IBM. In 1987, DEC’s profits peaked at $1.3 billion while its workforce would reach 125,000 employees the following year.

Despite its increasingly prominent goal of overtaking IBM for leadership in the computing industry, DEC faced numerous obstacles that would quickly erode its financial performance and financial performance. Beginning in the 1980s, the company faced increasing competitive pressures in its industry and saw its financial performance wane. All three of its efforts to enter the personal computer market ultimately failed, and DEC was slow to embrace client-server technology, which would supplant minicomputing as the dominant computer architecture in the midrange computing market. Olsen resisted
growing calls for a first-ever layoff at DEC and faced growing personal conflict with both the board of directors and the engineering organization (Schein, 2003). In June 1992, Olsen announced his resignation from DEC after thirty-five years at the helm.

Robert Palmer, who replaced Olsen, initiated several large-scale layoffs and sold many of DEC’s businesses in an effort to turnaround its performance. For instance, in early 1998, DEC reached an agreement to sell its Alpha microprocessor operations to Intel. Despite the cash infusions from these sales, DEC faced an increasingly untenable financial burden and declining market share. Despite denials in the popular press and employee newsletters, Palmer announced that DEC would be acquired by Compaq Computer Corporation. Compaq, which acquired DEC in June 1998, would ultimately agree to be acquired itself by the Hewlett Packard Company in 2001.
APPENDIX B

SCALE ITEMS

Need for Organizational Identification (NOID) (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004)

Without an organization to work for, I would feel incomplete.

I’d like to work in an organization where I would think of its successes and failures as being my successes and failures.

An important part of who I am would be missing if I didn’t belong to a work organization.

Generally, I do not feel a need to identify with an organization that I am working for.

Generally, the more my goals, values, and beliefs overlap with those of my employer, the happier I am.

I would rather say ‘we’ than ‘they’ when talking about an organization that I work for.

No matter where I work, I’d like to think of myself as representing what the organization stands for.

Positive Affectivity (Nezlek, 2005)

When you think about (company name), to what extent do you feel each of the following ways:

Happy               Peaceful
Alert               Excited
Satisfied           Calm
Relaxed             Content
Enthusiastic        Proud

Identification (Cameron, 2004)

Cognitive subscale

I often think about the fact that I am a(n) (ingroup member).

Overall, being a(n) (ingroup member) has very little to do with how I feel about myself.

In general, being a(n) (ingroup member) is an important part of my self-image.
The fact that I am a(n) (ingroup member) rarely enters my mind.

I am not usually conscious of the fact that I am a(n) (ingroup member)

Being a(n) (ingroup member) is an important reflection of who I am.

In my everyday life, I often think about what it means to be a(n) (ingroup member).

*Evaluation subscale*

In general, I’m glad to be a(n) (ingroup member).

I often regret that I am a(n) (ingroup member).

I don’t feel good about being a(n) (ingroup member).

Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as a(n) (ingroup member).

Just thinking about the fact that I am a(n) (ingroup member) sometimes gives me bad feelings.

*Affective subscale*

I have a lot in common with other (ingroup members).

I feel strong ties to other (ingroup members).

I find it difficult to form a bond with other (ingroup members).

I don’t feel a sense of being “connected” with other (ingroup members).

I really “fit in” with other (ingroup members).

In a group of (ingroup members), I really feel that I belong.

*Participation in Sustenance Activities*

I make sure to keep my contact information updated in the alumni group membership directory or mailing list.

I have been involved in the leadership of the group.

I regularly attend alumni group meetings or social events

I organize activities with other alumni.
I financially support the alumni association through membership or meeting dues.

I read information sent to me by the alumni group.

I keep in touch with other alumni on a regular basis.

I encourage others to join the alumni group.

I submit updates about myself to the alumni group’s webpage/newsletter.

**Perceived Organizational Identity Strength  (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004)**

There is a common sense of purpose in this organization.

The vision of this organization is clear and unique.

There is a strong feeling of unity among employees of this organization.

This organization has a specific mission shared by its employees.
APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

DEC Former Employee Survey

Introduction
Thank you for your interest and willingness to participate in this survey. As a former employee of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), you are invited to participate in a research project that is part of my dissertation study at Boston College, which is focusing on the history of DEC and the experiences of its former employees. My name is Ian Walsh and I am a doctoral candidate in Organization Studies, advised by Jean Bartunek, the Robert A. and Evelyn J. Ferris Chair and Professor in the Carroll School of Management at Boston College. Your participation is completely voluntary and your responses will be held in the strictest confidence; all results will be reported in the aggregate and individual responses will be anonymous.

Procedures:
I ask that you complete the following survey, which should take about 25 minutes. If you do not wish to answer a question, you can choose not to answer it. At the completion of the survey, you can indicate if you would be interested in participating in an optional, follow-up phone interview.

Risks:
While the study may include risks that are unknown at this time, there are no expected risks associated with participation in it.

Benefits:
I will provide a summary report to any respondents who are interested in the findings of this study. If you are interested in this report, you can contact me by email at walshia@bc.edu or by phone at 617-552-2148.

Withdrawal from the study:
If you choose to participate, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality:
I will be the only researcher who can identify your answers to any questions. The data will be stored in a secured area to which only I have access. Any report of survey data will be in aggregate form and thus it will be impossible for others to identify you as a participant or to attribute any responses to you. You will not be identified as a participant in any presentations or publications resulting from this study. All documentation relating to this study will be kept for the duration of the research project, up to 5 years, and then destroyed.
Questions:
If you have any questions about this study, please contact Ian Walsh (walshia@bc.edu, 617-552-2148) or Jean Bartunek (bartunek@bc.edu, 617-552-0455). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research, please contact the Boston College Office for Human Research Participant Protection at 617-552-4778.

1. Please check the following box to confirm the following statement:
□ I have read the contents of this consent form. I have received answers to my questions and give my consent to take part in this study.

SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION
The questions in this section will help us describe our survey participants.

2. What was your primary job function at DEC?
□ Administration □ Finance □ Manufacturing
□ Customer Service □ Human Resources □ Marketing
□ Engineering □ IT □ Sales
□ Other (please specify) _______________________

3. How would you describe the last position you held at DEC?
□ Individual contributor
□ First-line supervisor
□ Middle manager
□ Senior manager
□ Executive
□ Other Professional (e.g. MD, JD)
□ Other (please specify) _______________________

4. When were you employed by DEC? (If you were employed at DEC more than once, please list all periods of employment.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Month Hired (if known)</th>
<th>Year Hired</th>
<th>Month Left (if known)</th>
<th>Year Left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. What was your primary work location at DEC? If you worked at multiple locations, please indicate the location where you worked for the longest period of time.

City/Town: _______________________

State (if U.S.): _______________________

Country: _______________________

SECTION II: QUESTIONS ABOUT DEC

Below are a series of questions about your thoughts and feelings about DEC.

6. Please check your level of agreement with each of the statements about DEC below. You should answer these questions based on how you feel today, not when you worked there.

Even if the statements seem similar to each other, please rate your level of agreement with each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a strong feeling of unity among former employees of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not usually conscious of the fact that I was an employee of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel a sense of being “connected” with other employees of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone praises DEC, it feels like a personal compliment.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often regret that I was an employee of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I talk about DEC, I usually say “we” rather than “they.”</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The specific mission of DEC has been carried forward by its former employees.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really “fit in” with others who worked at DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, having been an employee of DEC is an important part of my self-image.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having been an employee of DEC is an important reflection of who I am.</td>
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<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a story in the media criticized DEC, I would feel embarrassed.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC’s successes are my successes.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel strong ties to others who worked at DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel good about having been an employee of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Please check your level of agreement with each of the statements about DEC below. You should answer these questions based on how you feel today, not when you worked there.

Even if the statements seem similar to each other, please rate your level of agreement with each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally, I feel good when I think about myself as someone who worked at DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often think about the fact that I was an employee of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it difficult to form a bond with others who worked at DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When someone criticizes DEC, it feels like a personal insult.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my everyday life, I often think about what it means to have been a DEC employee.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vision of DEC remains clear and unique.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, having been an employee of DEC has very little to do with how I feel about myself.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a lot in common with others who worked at DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just thinking about the fact that I worked at DEC sometimes gives me bad feelings.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I'm glad to have been an employee of DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fact that I was an employee of DEC rarely enters my mind.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a group of others who worked at DEC, I really feel that I belong.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very interested in what others think about DEC.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The common sense of purpose in DEC has disappeared.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Below is a list of specific emotions and feelings. When you think about DEC today, to what extent do you feel the following ways?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sluggish</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Please complete the sentence, “DEC was —” up to ten times however you think is most appropriate. There is no minimum or correct number of responses. When answering this question, think about your those qualities that are most **central, distinctive and enduring** to DEC. Think about DEC as a whole, and not in terms of specific individuals or departments. Also, please answer in terms of how the company was rather than as how you would wish it had been.

1. DEC was

2. DEC was

3. DEC was

4. DEC was

5. DEC was

6. DEC was

7. DEC was

8. DEC was

9. DEC was

10. DEC was
10 & 11. Please make a list of the former DEC employees with whom you are in contact and answer the corresponding questions about them. You may list anywhere from zero to 12 individuals. If you interact with more than 12 individuals, please select those with whom you most frequently communicate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee (you may just list initials or first name if you prefer)</th>
<th>When did you first meet this person?</th>
<th>About how often do you communicate at the present time?</th>
<th>At DEC, this person was...</th>
<th>Which category best represents your relationship today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Weekly or more often</td>
<td>My supervisor or manager</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Personal friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>2-3 times per year</td>
<td>Co-worker (same department)</td>
<td>Client/customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>Co-worker (other department)</td>
<td>Business contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Less than annually</td>
<td>I did not know him/her at DEC.</td>
<td>Co-worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Weekly or more often</td>
<td>My supervisor or manager</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Personal friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>2-3 times per year</td>
<td>Co-worker (same department)</td>
<td>Client/customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>Co-worker (other department)</td>
<td>Business contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Less than annually</td>
<td>I did not know him/her at DEC.</td>
<td>Co-worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Weekly or more often</td>
<td>My supervisor or manager</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>About once a month</td>
<td>Subordinate</td>
<td>Personal friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>2-3 times per year</td>
<td>Co-worker (same department)</td>
<td>Client/customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>Co-worker (other department)</td>
<td>Business contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>Less than annually</td>
<td>I did not know him/her at DEC.</td>
<td>Co-worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10 & 11. Please make a list of the former DEC employees with whom you are in contact and answer the corresponding questions about them. You may list anywhere from zero to 12 individuals. If you interact with more than 12 individuals, please select those with whom you most frequently communicate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee (you may just list initials or first name if you prefer)</th>
<th>When did you first meet this person?</th>
<th>About how often do you communicate at the present time?</th>
<th>At DEC, this person was…</th>
<th>Which category best represents your relationship today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ Before I worked at DEC</td>
<td>□ Monthly or more often</td>
<td>□ My supervisor or manager</td>
<td>□ Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ While I worked at DEC</td>
<td>□ About once a month</td>
<td>□ Subordinate</td>
<td>□ Personal friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ After I worked at DEC</td>
<td>□ 2-3 times per year</td>
<td>□ Co-worker (same department)</td>
<td>□ Client/customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Once per year</td>
<td>□ Co-worker (other department)</td>
<td>□ Business contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>□ Less than annually</td>
<td>□ I did not know him/her at DEC</td>
<td>□ Co-worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION III: QUESTIONS ABOUT FORMER DEC EMPLOYEE GROUPS

12. Are you aware of any organized groups, such as alumni/networking groups or online forums, for former employees of DEC?

☐ Yes
☐ No

The next item was only given to respondents who answered “Yes” to Question #12.

13. Have you ever been a member of any organized groups, such as alumni/networking groups or online forums, for former employees of DEC?

☐ I am currently a member.
☐ I am a former member.
☐ I have never been a member.
The next item was only given to respondents who answered “I am a former member” or “I am a current member to Question #13.” The first column of drop-down boxes offered the choices of “current member” and “former member.” The second column of drop-down boxes offered the choices of “Yes” and “No.”

14. For those DEC former employee groups in which you are or have been a member, please select an answer to the following questions. You may skip the rows for any groups in which you have not been involved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEC Alumni Austria</th>
<th>What is your current membership status?</th>
<th>Have you ever served as an officer of this group?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC Alumni NY/NJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC Alumni of South Florida and Latin America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC Canada Alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC Cluster Club (Switzerland)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC San Diego Alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decitaly (Italy)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECClub (Europe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECnott (Germany)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DecWest (Washington State)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEXODUS (UK)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Alumni Sverige (Sweden)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Community Chest (China/Hong Kong)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Semiconductor Alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>digitalavr.co.uk (Scotland)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DigitalElebra (Brasil)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>edxac (Finland)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-Digital Portugal Network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIO Salem Alumni (Salem, NH)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California DEC Alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The DEC Connection (formerly DECed out)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Digital Alumni (<a href="http://www.decalumni.org">www.decalumni.org</a>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrix Alumni mailing list</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.decnet.nl">www.decnet.nl</a> (Netherlands)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xdecories (Belgium)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next item was only given to respondents who answered “I am a current member” or “I am a former member.” to Question #13.

15. What would you say are the primary reasons that you are/were a member of any group(s) for former DEC employees?

The next item was only given to respondents who answered “I have never been a member.” to Question #13.

16. What would you say are the primary reasons that you are not involved in any group(s) for former DEC employees?

The next item was only given to respondents who answered “No” to Question #12.

17. If a group of former DEC employees wanted you to join them, what would you tell them would be the services, activities or benefits that would be most important to you?
18. How would other former DEC employees assess the extent to which you participated in the following activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financially support the former DEC employee group(s) through membership or meeting dues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep my contact information updated in the former DEC employee group directory(ies).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read announcements sent to me by the former DEC employee group(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep in touch with other former DEC employees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend social events with other former DEC employees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit updates about myself on the former DEC employee group(s) webpage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage others to join the former DEC employee group(s).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize activities with other former DEC employees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. Have you ever started or worked for an organization that you would consider to be an "offshoot" of DEC, such as a former DEC department in another company or an entrepreneurial venture whose work relates to DEC in some way?

- Yes, I have started and worked for a DEC offshoot.
- Yes, I have worked for a DEC offshoot.
- No, I have never worked for a DEC offshoot.

20. Please name the DEC offshoot(s) in which you have been involved.

SECTION IV: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

These questions will help us to better understand the overall profile of our survey population.

21. How would you describe your current employment status? (Please select all that apply.)

- Working full-time (paid or unpaid)
- Working part-time (paid or unpaid)
- Seeking a job
- Not presently working/Retired
- Student
- Other (please specify)

22. In addition to DEC, have you worked for any of the following companies on a regular or temporary basis? (Please select all that apply.)

- Apollo Computer
- EMC
- Data General Corporation
- Prime Computer
- IBM
- Compaq Computer Corporation
- Wang Laboratories
- The Hewlett-Packard Company
23. For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree. These questions relate to your life in general, not specifically your employment at DEC.

Even if the statements seem similar to each other, please rate your level of agreement with each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I express my disagreements with others openly.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find myself talking to those around me about non-business related matters.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay a good deal of attention to the feelings of others at work.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd like to work in an organization where I would think of its successes and failures as being my successes and failures.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have a choice, I try to work in a group instead of by myself.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather say 'we' than 'they' when talking about an organization that I work for.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally, the more my goals, values, and beliefs overlap with those of my employer, the happier I am.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally, I do not feel a need to identify with an organization that I am working for.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No matter where I work, I'd like to think of myself as representing what the organization stands for.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An important part of who I am would be missing if I didn't belong to a work organization.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to do my own work and let others do theirs.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without an organization to work for, I would feel incomplete.</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24. What is your age?

25. What is your gender?
- Female
- Male

26. What is your highest level of education?
- Doctoral or professional degree (J.D., M.D., Ph.D., etc.)
- Master’s degree (M.A., M.E.A., M.S., etc.)
- Bachelor’s degree (B.A., B.S., etc.)
- Some college
- Associate Degree
- High School
- Other (please specify)

27. We would appreciate if you would provide the following information for classification purposes.

ZIP/Postal Code (If U.S.):

Country of Residence:

28. If you are interested in a follow up interview and/or a summary report, please email me at walshia@bc.edu. Alternatively, you can also provide your email address here to express your interest in a follow up interview and/or summary report.

Email Address:

29. If you provided your email address above, please check the applicable box(es).

- Yes, I would like a summary report.
- Yes, I would like to participate in a follow-up interview.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!