The Dynamics of Employees' Identities in the Organization:
Evidence from a Korean Company

by

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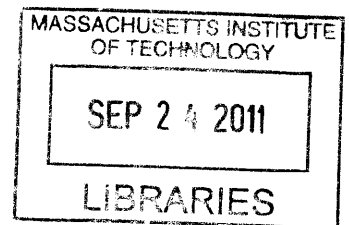in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about identity and identification in organizations. I analyze the dynamic processes by which individual employees' identities are constructed in a large global Korean company (K-Co) that actively pursues a strong organizational culture and an espoused employee identity called "K-C man."

First, I examine selection as the first stage of employees' identity dynamics—how the organization embodies the K-Co man identity through selection process. Data analysis showed that K-Co's selection process is organized to seek a good identity fit between an applicant and the organizationally espoused prototypical K-Co man. I compared the K-Co man identity that the organization pursues at selection with the attributes of the K-Co man identity perceived by the current individual K-Co employees. I found substantial consistency between them, which reveals the significance of selection as an initial reification of the organizationally espoused employee identity.

Second, I unpack K-Co's 4-week newcomer training program as the second stage of employees' identity dynamics—how organizational identification is ignited through this early socialization process. Interviews with trainers showed that the organization uses institutionalized socialization tactics intending to impose the K-Co man identity on newcomers, thereby imbuing trainees' organizational identification, and mentor and team are two important socialization agents in this process. However, empirical evidence also revealed that individual trainees do not always react to socialization agents as the organization expected: trainees' organizational identification is achieved mainly through mentor identification, but, contrary to the organization's intention, team identification does not converge into organizational identification.

Third, I analyze the employees' identity dynamics at the workplace as the third stage—how organizational identification varies among three occupational groups within K-Co (HR, Engineering, and Marketing). Even within the strong cultural context of K-Co, where the organization intends to control employees' identity work, I found the occupation each individual employee holds induces a significant variation in employees' organizational identification. Data analysis showed that how transparently K-Co's organizational identity is projected on the identities of three different occupations significantly affects each occupation incumbents' organizational identification. I also discuss how organizational tenure blurs this occupational variation in organizational identification, making all employees' identity work organization-focused.

3

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Acknowledgments

I cannot forget the first day of my life at MIT Sloan. It was such a beautiful sunny day, and I was joining the Ph.D. program's annual boat cruise event. A mild summer breeze over the Charles River seemed to hint that my Ph.D. life would fill with such freshness and brightness. However, it took only a very short time for me to realize that this would not be always the case. In the standing party format which I had never experienced in Korea, I had no idea how to come up and start talking to new people, and I also found out that my English needs to be significantly improved for appropriate communications with people there. My first day at MIT Sloan started with these language and culture shocks. Since then, my identity work has been in struggle. I kept asking myself: MIT Sloan is known to be such a prestigious place, but as a member of that community, why does my daily life seem to be far from being prestigious? What can I do here? Who the heck am I at MIT Sloan?

However, life is unpredictable. After the 6-year journey, now I am finishing my dissertation, which I could not even imagine on my first day at MIT Sloan. During the journey, I have met such a wonderful group of people, and now I can say that as long as one is with great people, life is predictable and it is truly cool!

I would like to call Tom Kochan my "father" at MIT Sloan. No doubt, he is a famous scholar surrounded by so many people who want to meet with him and get his help. However, in spite of his extremely busy schedule, he has been always ready to take care of me—I would say his help has been like fatherly "caring," more than just "advising." With endless tolerance, he guided me in not just how to do meaningful social science research both theoretically and empirically, but based on his deep knowledge on Eastern culture, he also guided me in how I, as a Korean, can accommodate into Western culture. From the first meeting with him in the fall of 2005 to the last in the spring of 2011, every moment with Tom has been full of encouragement, support, and a warm smile. He kept showing his trust in my language and research abilities, and I could be always equipped with firm self-confidence after sincere conversations with him.

I would like to call Lotte Bailyn my "mother" at MIT Sloan. She has always been my role model in terms of what a professor should be like. She has exemplified how equally important two identities of a professor—scholar and educator—are. Whenever I was stuck with whatever issues, I looked for her, just as a kid looks for his mother when in trouble. With her, every problem in my research and life has been "magically" figured out. Her ability to see the forest through the trees was truly marvelous, and with her amazing insight, my mediocre work has been always reinterpreted and reorganized, finally becoming an interesting and meaningful one. She was not always a generous mother. Sometimes she provided sharp criticisms about my work, but even at these moments, her magical power worked perfectly. I have never been discouraged, rather I always became highly motivated to make more efforts after meetings with her. She has evidently showed what "constructive criticism" exactly means.

John van Maanen's work has been the source of my intellectual inspiration, and I always felt honored to have John, such a sage in organization studies, in my dissertation committee. Two classical works by him (1979, 1984) have significant theoretical influence on two main chapters in this dissertation, and every moment in the meetings with this legendary scholar has thrilled me. In terms of methods as well, his unbelievably deep insight into qualitative methods has

enormously improved my work. Sometimes I was worried about if I could meet John's high expectation level about appropriate qualitative work. But I have learned so much through his rigorous instructions, which finally enabled me to get a sense of what social science research should essentially be like.

I owe the dissertation to Marilyn Roth, my piano teacher, as well. She has always instructed me how important it is to find a "balance" in life. When life looked difficult due to extreme stress out of Ph.D. studies, she convinced me how beautiful life is by sharing beautiful musical experiences with me. She has always been patient with my lack of piano practice, just emphasizing how blessing it is to have music in my life, even in those tough days at MIT. She also emphasized the value of having two identities—musician and researcher—and subsequent positive spillover I can enjoy from both of them. Without Marilyn, it would not have been possible to have memorable piano performance experiences in MIT Emerson Music Scholarship Recitals, which stimulated my passion towards music, research, and eventually, life.

No words can describe my gratitude to the friendship and support that my friends at MIT have shown to me. Last 6 years, I cannot even imagine a second that is not filled with the memories with MIT friends, and now I strongly feel that it is time for me to return their kindness. I deeply thank BPS friends for their sincere and invaluable help for my research as well as warm emotional support for my life at MIT Sloan. Without their support, the Ph.D. at MIT Sloan would not have been worth doing or even possible to survive. They have clearly shown that language is no barrier for building friendship. I also would like to thank all my Korean friends who are studying at MIT and other US schools. Whenever I felt I am losing myself in this English-spoken Western culture, I looked for them. Although extremely busy with their own research and life struggles, they always made their time for me, sharing enjoyable memories and giving me advice how to overcome the difficulties and keep my self-identity. In particular, for me, who had been always surrounded by social sciences or humanities majors before joining the MIT community, it has been such a surprising pleasure to find how awesome engineers and scientists are! To me, they have been like an oasis. Based on the "pure" friendship they showed, I could see the world with a new lens and be always recharged for moving forward.

This dissertation would have been impossible without the cooperation of many people at K-Co who gave me data and answered my naïve questions. Even with me, a total stranger to them, they shared their thinking and feeling about their organizational experiences and identity work. Through the interviews, I have learned so much about the essence of organizational behavior. It was such a fascinating experience to find how theories I learned in the classroom work in the real world. It was also so exciting to find some future research topics based on interesting views and invaluable ideas that the interviewees provided me. I would like to show deep appreciation to them.

Lastly, I thank my family. They have always been supportive, particularly in encouraging me to believe that I can do whatever I choose to do. With their unconditional love and trust, I could keep the positive sense of my self-identity. Throughout my Ph.D. life, it has been manifest that I am the luckiest guy, because I am a member of the most awesome family in the world. Now I make a resolution that during the rest of my life, I will do my best to make them feel that they are the luckiest because they are the father, mother, and sisters of me. Mom, Dad, Eun-Jung nuna, and Jooeun nuna, I love you with all my heart.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Background:

Theories of Identity and K-Co Man Identity

This dissertation is about identity and identification in organizations. Social theories have suggested that an individual's perception and presentation of self are products of social influences and situational/contextual cues (Blumer, 1986; Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). Since organizations are such strong situations, organizational values, norms, customs, and relationships with people in organizations are significant inputs in individuals' identity work. Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton (2000) argued that identity and identification are "root constructs" (p. 13) in organization studies potentially capable of explicating and predicting other various important behaviors in organizations. Actually, a number of prior studies have demonstrated this importance of identity and identification in organizational behavior by showing that when an individual identifies with one's organization, a variety of organizationally relevant outcomes such as cooperation with other members, organizational citizenship behavior, intrinsic motivation, low turnover and turnover intentions, organizationally beneficial decision making, positive evaluation of the organization, and so on are induced (e.g., Bartel, 2001; Cheney, 1983; Dukerich, Golden, & Shortell, 2002; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000; Mael & Ashforth, 1995; Tyler, 1999).

However, in contrast to prolific empirical findings on the consequences resulting from those root constructs, the current knowledge on *how* people identify with their organizations—the dynamic *process* through which one comes to integrate beliefs about one's organization into one's self-identity—is sparse, only with few exceptions (e.g., Ibarra, 1999; Pratt, 2000). According to Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley's (2008) recent diagnosis of the research on identity and identification in organizations, "yet surprisingly little research has attempted to capture these dynamics" because dominant research designs have tended to promote "snapshot images of identification" (p. 340). This dissertation thus seeks to respond to this scholarly call,

exploring an answer to the following question: how do organization and individual interplay in the dynamic process towards identity formation?

In a practical sense, the role of identity and identification in organizations takes on even more importance. As Rousseau (1995) pointed out, the "ecology of contracts" (p. 202) between organizations and individuals has changed in the era in which job security no longer serves as the cornerstone of psychological contracts in organizations (Anderson & Schalk, 1998). Also, there is the increasing propensity of employees to move across organizations as new opportunities arise or as the phenomenon of boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) becomes more salient in professional labor markets. Thus, under this dynamic environment of employment, how to inculcate individuals with organizational values so that they continue to act as organizational members has become a crucial question. This indicates that in managing employment relations, organizations need to understand how important employees perceive the organizational membership is in their identity work. Further, organizations need to know how this perception of importance varies among different groups of employees within the organization—especially, professionals—because individuals are actively engaged in identity work not just with the organizationally imposed employee identity and sometimes resist the organizationally imposed employee identity. They pursue individual agency in their identity work in order to maintain their professional, occupations, or other sources of identification that they carry with them into the organization. By addressing those issues, this dissertation responds to the practical call as well.

To explicate scholarly and practical issues of identity and identification, I analyze the case of a large global Korean company (K-Co). This company actively pursues a strong organizational culture and identity, projected on its espoused employee identity, called "K-Co

11

man." I delve into the dynamic processes by which employees' identities as a K-Co man are constructed and how their identity work as a K-Co man varies. Before getting into a detailed investigation of the dynamics of employees' identity work at K-Co, in this introductory chapter I provide a review of theories of identity and identification and the contextual background of the organization that I use as empirical evidence.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Symbolic Interactionism

In examining the issues about identity construction, this study starts with sociologists' basic assumption about self and identity that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society. This notion of "reciprocity" in the identity construction process originates from the approach of symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1986; Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Symbolic interactionists are interested in how people form beliefs and feelings about their self-views, and they argue that individuals infer who they are based on how others treat them. People make identity claims by conveying images that signal how they view themselves or hope to be viewed by others. By observing their own behavior as well as the reactions of others, who accept, reject, or renegotiate these public images, they maintain or modify their private self-concepts. Mead (1934) reified this distinction between "who I am" and "who I believe others think I am" by referring to "I" and "me":

> The "I" is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the "me" is the organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organized "me", and then one reacts toward that as an "I" (p. 175).

Thus, identity construction should be understood as a dynamic social process between "me" and "I", and "taken together, they constitute a personality as it appears in social

experience" (Mead, 1934, p. 178). Individuals not only adjust themselves to the attitudes of others, but also change the attitudes of others.

Mead's notion of reciprocal structure in identity formation became more specified in Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework. He characterized social life as dramaturgy where people enact identities they want to claim. Just like a theater where an actor and audience conspire to form certain impressions that sustain the play, in everyday life, people enact roles they want to claim and their role performances are judged by others. Basically, identity construction is a performance, and actions of an actor are deliberately chosen to control or manage the impressions that the identity performance leaves on audiences. This identity performance, like audience applause, needs to be affirmed by others for social validation, in order for the actor to minimize the gap between enacted identity and claimed identity (Ashforth, 1998). That is, an individual impresses others, and those others conspire with the individual to help him maintain successful social interactions.

In all, the main argument of the symbolic interactionist perspective is that identity is not just merely a construction of one's mind, but a product of social dynamics. Accordingly, the social setting wherein one is situated includes a significant meaning in individuals' identity construction processes because it tacitly tells us what to do, think, and feel, and eventually what to be. Simply speaking, "society shapes self shapes social behavior" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 285).

Social Identity Theory

Psychologists also have provided significant theoretical inputs on how people make sense of their selves in social contexts. Social identity theory and self-categorization theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) are two representative social

13

psychological perspectives that explicate how individuals construct their self-concepts from the identity of the collectives they belong to. Tajfel (1981) defined social identity as "that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership" (p. 255). Social identities are shared by members and accentuate members' perceived similarity. Individuals classify the world around them into in-group and out-group, and by categorizing self into a more inclusive social unit—in-group—they cognitively represent the social group and share the group prototypical traits, thus depersonalize their self-concepts (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). That is, through this process, "I become we" (Brewer, 1991, p. 476). This concept of social identity is conceptually contrasted to personal identity, another significant portion that composes an individual's self-concept. Personal identity is the "individuated self—those characteristics that differentiate one individual from others" (Brewer, 1991, p. 476), so it encompasses some idiosyncratic attributes of an individual.

Social identity and personal identity are recursively interrelated, and often these two identities are likely to be under a struggle because the demands of the social identities sometimes conflict with an individual's personal needs or uniqueness. Therefore, these two identities need to be negotiated (Swann, 1987) for adequate social interactions, and this notion of dynamic interplay between personal identity and social identity for identity negotiation is theoretically embodied in Brewer's (1991, 2003) optimal distinctiveness theory. She argued that by making an optimal balance between desires for inclusiveness ("How am I similar to others?") and for exclusiveness ("How am I different from others?"), individuals can reduce conflict and increase well-being. The notion of a dynamic interplay at the boundary of two identities is also reflected in the concept of "identity work" (Snow & Anderson, 1987; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

Identity work is defined as the "range of activities that individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (Snow & Anderson, 1987, p. 1348). The concept of identity work thus focuses on individuals' active response to social groups' significant influences on their identity construction processes (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006).

Throughout the identity negotiation or alignment process, one's beliefs about one's social group become self-defining, and the theoretical concept of "social identification" includes both this state and the processes towards the state (Ashforth et al., 2008; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006; Pratt, 1998). If one identifies with a social group, it means the individual has the perception of oneness with or belongingness to that group, and by categorizing oneself into some human aggregate, individuals cognitively incorporate the goals and values attached to that membership into their sense of self (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Rousseau, 1998). Social identification also includes an affective element that involves emotional attachment to a certain collective, as Harquail (1998) has pointed out: "identification engages more than our cognitive self-categorization and our brains, it engages our hearts" (p. 225). Through social identification people think and feel that they are connected to social groups, and this cognition and affect reciprocally reinforce social identification (Ashforth et al., 2008; Edwards, 2005).

Identity and Identification in an Organizational Context

Social identities can contain categories embedded in various social contexts such as race, age, gender, nationality, occupational roles, organizational membership, and the like (Ashforth, 2001). However, few social contexts compare to organizations in terms of manifesting the importance of identity and identification issues (Blader, Wrzesniewski, & Bartel, 2007). Work is so essential in modern life and the identity formed at the workplace contains a significant

15

meaning in deriving a sense of self—"you are what you do" (Gini, 2001). Accordingly, the organization, as a dominant place or strong situation where one's work life and work identity are embedded, also has significant inputs on individuals' identity work. Organizations themselves possess identities reified through organizational values, norms, rituals, customs, languages, and relationships, which can be central, distinctive, and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985), and, in reality, for many people the identity of their organization may be more prevalent and salient than ascribed identities based on race, gender, or religion (Hogg & Terry, 2000).

Issues about identity and identification in organizations are central concepts that are attracting increasing theoretical attention of social scientists (Ashforth et al., 2008; Edwards, 2005; Riketta, 2005). Organizational identification is considered a key psychological mechanism building the underlying link between individual and organization, because this construct captures the fundamentals of "Who am I or who are we in the organization?" and helps explain how employees develop ways of thinking, feeling, and acting within an organizational context. Hence, unpacking individuals' identity work situated in an organizational context provides a subtext of organizational phenomena that reveals an essential and visceral connection between the individual and a critical social context in modern life—organizations.

What Does This Dissertation Add to Previous Literature?

A large group of scholars in social sciences has actively captured the importance of identity and identification in an organizational setting, represented by organizational psychologists and organizational sociologists. As Pratt et al. (2006) argued, the current state of identity research in organization science remains a "loosely affiliated body of research" (p. 238). These two groups of organization scientists have tended to scrutinize the same social

phenomenon—identity dynamics between individual and organization—with different theoretical lenses.

First, in terms of agency, organizational psychologists have focused primarily on *individual agency* in unraveling people's identity work in an organizational context (Cheney, 1983; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994), whereas organizational sociologists have put their main focus on what the *agents of organizations* do for constructing employees' identities using a number of organizational socialization tactics (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Second, in terms of structure, organizational psychologists have heavily drawn on an *organizational* lens with the belief that an organization is a significant situational and contextual structure that affects one's identity work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), whereas organizational sociologists have actively employed the *occupational* lens with a distinct emphasis on the impact of one's occupation, as a significant structural variable, on the process of work identity construction in the organization (Barley, 1996; Van Maanen & Barley, 1984).

Noting this implicit cleavage between organization scholars, I invoke both organizational psychological and organizational sociological perspectives, thus incorporating their different theoretical and phenomenal emphases into this study on identity and identification in the organization. In other words, this dissertation's goal is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamic processes by which employees' identities are constructed in an organization by bridging the two important, but loosely coupled, perspectives in organization science.

In terms of methodology as well as theory, I bridge two different approaches. This study adopts a multi-method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative methods: I conduct both interviews and surveys for empirical evidence. This multi-method approach fits the current state of the literature and research design in identity research. According to Edmondson and

17

McManus' (2007) framework of "methodological fit," identity research falls into the category of the intermediate state—between nascent and mature theory states—because it still depends on provisional models and constructs and thus needs a new integration of theoretical perspectives. This implies that identity research currently requires both thematic analysis of qualitative data and statistical analysis of quantitative data in order to reach a theoretically mature state. Careful analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data will increase confidence that the identity researchers' explanations of the essential organizational phenomena are more plausible than alternative interpretations (Edmondson & McManus, 2007). As a result, this dissertation also leaves room for a contribution to identity research in organization science—in a methodological sense.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: K-CO AND K-CO MAN

K-Co

The organization analyzed for this study is K-Co. K-Co is a large global conglomerate headquartered in South Korea. As one of the top three business corporations in Korea, this company is composed of more than 30 affiliated businesses in various industry fields that include electronics and chemical industries, financial services, and the like.

History

K-Co's history shows various steps of diversification and globalization. Originating from a small trade business in the 1930s, K-Co widened its business scope into producing basic commodities such as sugar and wool and also started involvement in the life insurance industry. K-Co's significant growth began with its aggressive investment in semiconductor and

information/telecommunication industries in the 1970s, which paved the way towards a stronger hold on the international market with high-tech products. These business activities have contributed to achieving K-Co's present image as one of the world's leading electronics companies, specializing in digital appliances and media, semiconductors, and system integration. K-Co's business affiliates also have covered heavy industries including shipbuilding and construction, chemical industries, and supporting cultural and artistic activities. This development history of K-Co—starting with trading, then moving onto light manufacturing, heavy industries and technology-based businesses—is closely linked to Korea's progress in economic development, and K-Co is estimated as having played a critical role in advancing Korea's economy at each step. Currently, K-Co is operating overseas branches in more than 60 countries and actively recruiting foreign talent, which reinforces K-Co's organizational identity as a global company.

Management Philosophy[1]

Since founding, K-Co has publicly presented itself as having "core values" as a management philosophy. Reflecting the changes of business and economic environments, these core values have apparently evolved—actually they have been through five phases of content reform throughout K-Co's history. However, K-Co's primary emphasis on the importance of human resources in its management philosophy—"people and talent first"—has been consistently kept. The following quotes from the founder and the chairperson of K-Co reveal the way those in the top ranks of the company present the values of K-Co.

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[1] All information in this section is based on my interviews with K-Co employees, the training manuals distributed to every trainee in K-Co's 4-week newcomer training program, and my reading of published books about K-Co. I do not provide the details of these books to hide the real name of K-Co.

(Quotes from the founder)

A company is its people.

It's not an exaggeration to say that I spent 80 percent of my life in recruiting and training people.

I put my whole mind to constructing the training facilities. I took a careful look even at the detailed menu and the arrangement of the trees in the garden of the training facilities.

(Quotes from the chairperson)

One genius can feed millions of others. For the upcoming era where creativity will be the most important driver of business success, we need to hire the best. The economic value of one genius is more than $1 billion.

Since the 21st century would be the era of education and culture, decent education and unique culture will be the crucial weapon for one to become the true winner of the world.

Another salient trait found in K-Co's management philosophy is this company's emphasis on the spirit of excellence/perfectionism. The founder of K-Co had a clear strategic goal of achievement: taking and keeping the first place in business. To achieve this goal, he strongly pursued the philosophy of completion and perfectionism, as illustrated in his words, "To build an insufficient enterprise is the equivalent of a crime." The philosophy is also cued by K-Co's company naming, and actually some K-Co affiliates contain in their names the Chinese characters meaning "No.1," or the best. In Korea, K-Co is well-known for its image of "strong control" and K-Co employees apparently perceive this as the key attribute of K-Co. As one K-Co employee said during the interview with me:

> K-Co is managed and controlled by a system. Strictly structured processes of work and thorough record management system have been firmly established. The favorite values at K-Co could be summarized by the key words like systematic, well-organized, and minutely established processes. Continuous accumulation, confirmation, and reinforcement of perfectionism to achieve and keep the No.1 position affects not only how people work but also how people think and behave.

20

Strong HRM, Strong Culture, and Espoused Employee Identity (K-Co Man)

To realize this management philosophy, K-Co has put heavy emphasis on its human resource management (HRM) practices, especially selection, training and education. As for selection, K-Co has its own aptitude test developed by psychologists who work for K-Co, and applicants must pass this K-Co specific test and go through multiple processes of interviews to be hired. As for training and education, all newcomers must go through a 4-week newcomer training program before they start work, and at each promotion point in one's career path, a training program that educates a new identity fit for the new status, rank, and leadership environment in K-Co is provided. K-Co also provides MBA opportunities, foreign language educations, academic training for R&D, and the like. Through these multiple layers of the HRM system, K-Co has tried to keep and reinforce its management philosophy.

Typically, HRM is seen as an administrative or functional tool (Hunt & Boxall, 1998), but in the context of a strong HRM system such as K-Co, HRM practices may be understood as "key providers and manifestations of culture and cultural material in organizations" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007, p. 712). Culture is defined as a framework of meaning shared by the members of a social unit, including fundamental assumptions, values, behavioral norms and expectations (Geertz, 1994; Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1992; Smircich, 1983). At K-Co, the HRM system has attempted to create, symbolize, and communicate the organizationally espoused values, norms, and assumptions consistent with the management philosophy through its specific practices such as selection, training and education, and promotion (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). A strong organizational culture has emerged from this strong HRM architecture and functioned as a social control system—shaping the attitudes and behaviors of individuals and groups with certain

21

normative orders that display the approved/disapproved patterns (O'Reilly, 1989). One

interviewee working at the HR department at K-Co mentioned:

> Although every organization has its own organizational culture, I think K-Co has the most distinct and strong organizational culture. A strong solidarity under the name of K-Co is salient. Above all, K-Co has a strong education system. From the newcomer stage, every employee is continuously, repetitively, and systematically exposed to the education of K-Co spirit, K-Co management philosophy, K-Co way, and K-Co values. K-Co has established 5 concrete core values, and they function as clear criteria for making decisions and estimating appropriate behaviors. A strong and strict organizational culture or regulations based on all of these traits make K-Co people always react and move fast and uniformly.

A strong organizational culture derived from a strong HRM system affects individuals'

identity work. People in organizations engage in identity work, pursuing an organizationally

constructed social identity that provides meaning and connectedness, which is helpful when

coping with work tasks and social interactions (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). In particular, in a

strong cultural context such as K-Co, individuals' identity work as an organizational member

becomes remarkably crucial (O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). At K-Co, with its

prominent emphasis on the values of human resources, HRM may function as a "meaning-

creating device" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007, p. 712), based on which K-Co members actively

develop and reproduce meanings about who they are and what their organizational membership

represents. HRM system, as an "identity-aligning project" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007, p. 719),

bridges the organizationally espoused identity and each individual's personal identity. At K-Co,

this organizationally espoused identity is called the "K-Co man[2]." K-Co's strong cultural

context in line with its strong HRM practices have constructed this identity-loaded label and

provided the values and norms regarding what a K-Co man should be like. The desired image,

attitude, and behavior that a K-Co man should seek have been constructed, confirmed, changed,

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[2] There are women in K-Co, but even they call it K-Co "man." This term has been traditionally used, and the "man" does not necessarily have a gender implication.

22

negotiated, and reproduced throughout K-Co's long history, and they have had significant influences on K-Co employees' identity work—"Who am I as a K-Co man?" This dissertation aims to unravel exactly what constitutes the identity of a K-Co man, how it is constructed, and how it varies among K-Co employees.

OVERVIEW OF DISSERTATION

To address the issues regarding K-Co employees' identity work as a K-Co man, I follow the chronological order of employees' career stages: selection stage, training stage, and work stage. Each chapter in this dissertation discusses each stage.

Chapter 2 is entitled "K-Co Man at the Gate: Selection as an Initial Reification of K-Co Man Identity." In this chapter, I first decompose the detailed attributes of the K-Co man identity by examining how they are perceived and evaluated as positive or negative by current K-Co employees. Then, I investigate the selection at K-Co as the first stage of employees' identity dynamics—how this K-Co man identity is initially reified through the selection process. Selection processes serve the function of choosing individuals whose values apparently fit organizational values and filtering out those whose values do not. Likewise, interviews with 4 selection staff members and archival data reveal how the process of selection at K-Co tries to provide a good identity fit between an applicant, a potential K-Co man, and an organizationally espoused prototypical K-Co man. I finally compare the K-Co man identity as perceived by *individual* K-Co employees with the K-Co man identity as the *organization* pursues at organizational entry.

Chapter 3, "K-Co Man at the Camp: Newcomer Training Program as Igniting Organizational Identification," unveils the newcomer training program at K-Co as the second stage of employees' identity dynamics—how organizational identification is ignited through this

23

early socialization process. K-Co has an intensive 4-week newcomer training program that all newcomers must go through before they start work. I utilize this training program as an empirical context to explore the *process* of organizational identification—how organizational identification emerges through the interplay between organization and individuals. Theoretically, this chapter speaks to two main, but loosely coupled, bodies of literature in identity research—organizational identification (primarily on individual agency) and organizational socialization (primarily on organizational agency)—by bridging them together as well as elaborating each. Methodologically, this chapter uses both qualitative data (interviews with 6 trainers and 6 trainees) and quantitative data (a pre- and post-training survey responded to by 90 trainees). Data analysis shows how trainers—agents of the *organization*—implement institutionalized socialization tactics in order to infuse the K-Co man identity into trainees, thus attaining their organizational identification. It also reveals how *individual* trainees react to this organization's intention by finding the answer to the question: is trainees' organizational identification actually achieved through the processes the organization expects or not?

In Chapter 4, "K-Co Man at the Workplace: Identifying the Core-Periphery Map of Organizational Identification with an Occupational Perspective," I unravel the employees' identity dynamics in the workplace as the third stage—how organizational identification varies among current K-Co employees under K-Co's strong cultural context. Based on a qualitative analysis of interviews with 49 current K-Co employees, I delve into variation in employees' identity work as a K-Co man among three key departments (HR, Engineering, and Marketing departments) within K-Co, and draw a core-periphery map of organizational identification. To identify these variations, I employ the concept of occupation that has been scrutinized throughout the long tradition of organizational sociologists, who have regarded occupation as key in

understanding how one's work life is organized in organizations. In other words, I enrich the organizational identification literature largely dominated by organizational psychologists that focuses on collectives—*organization*—as a structural variable affecting individuals' identity work, by incorporating the sociological perspective that focuses on roles—*occupation*—into it.

Chapter 5 is a conclusion chapter. In this chapter I summarize what I found and discuss theoretical and practical implications of the findings. I also suggest future research directions.

CHAPTER 2

K-Co Man at the Gate:

Selection as an Initial Reification of

K-Co Man Identity

As discussed in Chapter 1, under the strong culture of K-Co, the desired image, attitude, and behavior that employees at K-Co should seek have been constructed throughout K-Co's history, and they have had significant influence on K-Co employees' identity work as a "K-Co man." In this chapter, I start with decomposing the concrete attributes of the K-Co man identity. Based on my interviews with 49 K-Co employees, I describe how individuals perceive the common and distinctive characteristics of K-Co employees. Interview data reveal a set of salient attributes that K-Co employees share within the strong cultural context of K-Co.

Then, I analyze how these characteristics perceived by K-Co employees match the attributes of a K-Co man that K-Co pursues as a desired employee identity. In other words, I compare the K-Co man identity as *individual* K-Co employees perceive it with the K-Co man identity that the *organization* intentionally imposes upon its employees. Specifically, I look at K-Co's selection process. Selection, as the first stage of employees' identity dynamics, has the meaning as an initial reification of K-Co man identity, because selection processes serve the function of choosing individuals whose values are compatible with organizational values and screening out those whose values are incompatible (Chatman, 1991). Data analysis based on the interviews with 4 selection staff members and archival data on the selection at K-Co unpacks the details of the desired employee identity sought at organizational entry and how K-Co's selection process has been organized in order to pursue good value and identity fit between the applicant, a potential K-Co man, and the organizationally espoused K-Co man.

HOW INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES PERCEIVE K-CO MAN IDENTITY

In all interviews with 49 K-Co employees, I started with broad questions such as "What do you think or feel about K-Co employees?" or "What occurs to you when you think about

people at K-Co?" Interviewees' responses included various distinctive aspects of K-Co

employees, and below I describe a set of attributes that have commonly, consistently, and

conspicuously emerged throughout the interviews.

Common Attributes

Homogeneously docile. The first salient attribute of K-Co employees consistently

mentioned is that there is a strong similarity among K-Co people in terms of disposition. As one

interviewee asserted, people at K-Co are "terrifyingly docile and homogeneous." Adjectives

such as gentle, kind, meek, or compliant continuously appeared when interviewees were asked to

describe the characteristics of K-Co employees. This trait of docility is said to be widely spread

among K-Co people. One interviewee depicted K-Co as a group of "normalized" people:

> It's not easy to find salient individualities among K-Co people. They are very well
> *normalized.* They are a group of people that are extremely similar. Of course, there are
> some people who reveal their unique individual characters, but even this type of person
> becomes normalized when a specific task needs cooperation among employees. They
> voluntarily kill their uniqueness, if needed. There may be some differences in people's
> capacities, but no differences in people's disposition.

The following quote from another interviewee also illustrates the perception of

normalized compliance among K-Co employees:

> Basically, K-Co people tend to not express their complaints against the company, even
> though they have them. Or they tend to have a very low bar for complaining. They don't
> think much about if the company is doing right or wrong. Rather, they very much
> concentrate on their work. It could be that because people just focus on their work, they
> are apt to be insensitive to various social issues around K-Co or organizational institution
> or policy changes. Some policy changes could be disadvantages to some people, but
> they, trying to understand the unavoidable circumstances the organization may have, do
> not outwardly display their complaints. You know the proverb, "A cornered stone meets
> the mason's chisel," right? That tells much about K-Co people's general disposition. K-
> Co people all know that standing out is not welcome in this organization.

The attribute of homogeneous docility found among the employees may be closely

related to the specific corporate value K-Co has pursued, which is "single direction." The

meaning of this management philosophy is that every member of K-Co should share the common

core values of K-Co and move towards a specific single direction K-Co aims at, based on unified

order and rule for maximizing efficiency, collective capacity, and performance. An HR staff

clarified this as follows:

> Overall, K-Co people, from the top rank to the bottom, are good followers of the rules. Since strong culture and rules have managed employees, even in a very hard time, they tend to universally act and move to one direction, once the direction is decided. The chairperson of K-Co embodied this as the philosophy of "single direction." There could be a series of intense discussions in the process through which the direction is set. However, once it is set and confirmed, people follow it.

Under the strong influence of the organizational philosophy and culture, people at K-Co

see themselves complying with the organizationally espoused norms and values. The following

quote suggests that K-Co's organizational culture affects even K-Co employees' non-work-

related behavior:

> Let me give you an example. Imagine the situation that a bus is arriving in front of a K-Co building. Then, seriously, people automatically stand in a queue to get on the bus, no matter how many people are waiting. It's truly a wonder! I'm pretty sure they should be in a disorder pushing each other, if they're in the same situation outside the company. But wherever inside the company, they're always in a queue. K-Co people seem to be always ready to be so obedient to the rules.

Fit for system and perfectionism. As mentioned in chapter 1, one of the core values

espoused at K-Co is perfectionism/excellence. As a tool for realizing this value, K-Co has

developed a culture of system and control. One interviewee used a metaphor of "well-organized

desks":

> Whenever I think of K-Co... an image of well-organized array of desks occurs to me. Imagine a modern office space, which is very clean and organized. There are so many desks but everything is in a perfect order. And for each desk you know exactly in which drawer a red pen is and in which drawer your notebook is... At K-Co, you can know exactly what you should do, and you can expect what you do will lead to exactly what.

To keep this "thorough" culture, employees are implicitly or explicitly required to be always prepared for and meticulous about the process of work[3], making sure that everything is in a perfect order. An interviewee described the "K-Co style" as a "look-before-you-leap style," which leads K-Co people to be "calculative" or "reactive," rather than "proactive" or "aggressive." Another said, "Sometimes I feel like K-Co is operated by a system, not by human beings," which implies that perfectionism is deeply ingrained in how K-Co people work, and has functioned as a cultural control system that shapes the espoused attitudes and behaviors of individuals. To illustrate,

> Think about a racing game. Racers are supposed to start right after the starting signal, and most of racers actually do, right? But... we don't. We think one more time at the moment, and then start. Instead, we run at much higher speed, and finally hit the goal earlier than any others. We have learned and so we are very familiar with this style of working. I feel K-Co's achievements so far are based on this working culture. In a sense, this could look defensive or reactive, but I would say these working and behavioral patterns, orders, and norms compose the DNA rooted in K-Co and its employees. This is the K-Co culture that K-Co people implicitly agree upon.

However, as the following quote demonstrates, sometimes K-Co employees seem to be too obsessed with the notion of perfectionism:

> People at K-Co tend to be perfectionism-oriented. Mistakes are not acceptable. Of course, I wouldn't say I myself am exceptional to this attribute of K-Co people. Whatever we do, all is recorded and organized in manuals... especially, when we're preparing for an event. For instance... when we're preparing for the aptitude test as a process of mass recruitment... normally, since we need a spacious place to take a large number of applicants in, we rent a school building for one day. Then, way before the exam day, we go to the school and prepare as much as possible according to the list of expected questions that our supervisor may ask when he's visiting for a final inspection.

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[3] Interestingly, I myself experienced this trait saliently found among K-Co people, during my data collection. An interviewee has prepared even for the interview with me in advance. He said:

> In preparation for this interview, this morning I jotted down the words that occurred to me when I think of K-Co. They were decent, neat, ordered, clean, prepared, minute, refined, planned... When an interview is scheduled, I prepare beforehand expecting what would be the main issues, even if I have only 10 minutes for it. It could be possible that once I meet with the interviewer, I start saying whatever random things I have in my mind and then, in the course of the conversation, I manage the direction or logic of my saying. But this is not the style I individually prefer. Also, this is not how work is done in this company.

Even the history of that school, total number of students and teachers, the size of the school building, number of graduates from that school... We all know that this information on the school has nothing to do with our company's recruitment, but we examine them. Actually, there is an episode that when a supervisor asked the species of a tree in the school garden, no one could answer. After that accident, we need to even investigate the trees!

The quote above implies that though K-Co's and K-Co employees' pursuit of a system of perfection could engender high quality performance (as one said, "K-Co people are strongly trained in a top-down system, and they are trying to perform more than 120% of what they're requested to do without any mistake, whatever it is."), there simultaneously could be the downside of this organizational culture, coming from too much bureaucratization—hierarchy of authority, presence of organizational control, procedural specification, and division of labor (Hall, 1968). The bureaucratic features of K-Co's perfectionism-oriented cultural control, coupled with K-Co employees' dispositional docility, are likely to lead the employees to accept and execute whatever is ordered by the top. One interviewee noted: "A competent worker at K-Co is the one good at making a perfect report that would please one's supervisor, by cleverly guessing that supervisor's mind." Several interviewees depicted this aspect of K-Co culture as a "military culture." Employees, as a member of a strict system of control, are supposed to do what is instructed diligently and repetitively, and managers continuously superintend them in order that the division of labor systematically works. An interviewee pictured the scene of a meeting at K-Co as follows:

People do not discuss at the meetings. The boss delivers his ideas. Subordinates just write at the boss' dictation, without saying a word. This even applies to the star players at the level of department manager. In the meeting with an executive, they keep writing down what the executive is saying, in a fixed posture. And when the executive asks something, they try to find the answer that he would like to hear from them. No discussion, just reporting.

31

Before and after meetings, K-Co people should do "a lot of paperwork and there are minutely defined standard format, size, and font universally used in the reports at K-Co," said an interviewee. Some interviewees argued this standardized way of paperwork makes reading the reports easy and fast, thus maximizing efficiency, whereas others said it induces inefficiency because of the time wasted for the format, not for the content. Overall, as one interviewee asserted, "At K-Co, one needs to be the best secretary in order to survive best!"

Extremely hardworking and loyal to the company. To be excellent and perfect, K-Co employees are expected not only to fit the K-Co's systematic control, but also to work very hard. As an interviewee mentioned, "A desired employee identity at K-Co would be the employee who works hard, follows the company's directions well, steadily engenders good performance, and makes some sacrifice for the company with high loyalty." The notion of hard work is widespread within K-Co, and it intensifies competitiveness among K-Co employees. As one interviewee noted, "If one is feeling that enough efforts haven't been put in his work, he himself becomes restless first even before anyone else criticizes the quality of his work quality." K-Co people tend to believe that K-Co's "No. 1" places in many business areas have been possibly achieved due to this hardworking culture, and the employees' pride as a member of the No. 1 organization has reinforced their loyalty towards K-Co, resulting in more hard work. One interviewee even described K-Co employees' hardworking behaviors as "inertia":

> There's inertia of hardworking in K-Co. The top management group is full of hard workers who have worked with the schedule of Mon-Tue-Wed-Thu-Fri-Fri-Fri, and this way of work has been naturally conveyed to the subordinates. Both quality and quantity of work would matter, but I think, compared to other companies, my company seems to value quantity over quality. The absolute length of working hours here is longer than any other companies'. Assume that there're two workers. One works for 4 hours and the other works for 2 hours. The former's performance could be only 5% better than the latter's, though the former has worked twice more than the latter. But, anyways, the former wins the game! This is how K-Co people work and why K-Co has kept its first place in business.

32

Again, combined with K-Co people's homogeneously docile disposition, the hardworking culture tends to be accepted without significant complaint. For example, one interviewee who has previous work experience in two other companies before joining K-Co said:

> K-Co people surprisingly work hard. I've never seen this kind of group before. I'm sure this extremely hardworking culture would never happen in any companies. In other companies, it's very rare to work in weekend and why pull an all-nighter? But here at K-Co, there's a culture that a boss, when going home, can assign his subordinate a task that, to be finished by the next day, may make the subordinate have no choice but to pull an all-nighter. Without hesitation, he can say "Do it by tomorrow morning!" and the subordinate just puts every effort to complete it. No resistance.

Quite a few interviewees pointed out that K-Co's organizational identity could be characterized as "performance-oriented, not relationship-oriented." There seems to be a common perception among K-Co employees that K-Co's performance evaluation is based on a strict, objective, rational, and fair system: what significantly determines one's evaluation result is the objective quality of one's task performance, not how one establishes the relationships with others or deals with politics. One interviewee noted:

> K-Co is a clean organization. Any type of illegal behavior or corruption is strictly prohibited. Supervisors never take any types of gifts from their subordinates. What this means is that I myself can have significant influence and control on my performance. My performance appraisal is determined by nothing but my abilities and my efforts. I'm sure within K-Co this belief is widely shared. Employees trust in their company and its rationalities.

As a result, K-Co employees are likely to primarily focus on, among others, maximizing their task performance that is expected to ensure better evaluation and compensation. Their organizational life simply centers on work and performance, and this further stimulates K-Co employees' hardworking incentives and corroborates K-Co's hardworking culture.

However, this cultural attribute of K-Co also reveals some drawbacks. An interviewee asserted, "K-Co is a good company, but K-Co is not a good company to work for," then he added:

33

It's like the difference between American supermarkets and European supermarkets. American supermarkets are open in weekend, arguing they work for customers, but European supermarkets have a different idea that the employees are also customers—if the employees are forced to work even in weekend, is that really for customers? K-Co is like American supermarkets. K-Co is a good company since they provide customers with the best products and services, but to do that, K-Co employees need to work very hard, which makes their work life hard. K-Co is not a good company to work for.

Many interviewees mentioned they are struggling with burnout and unbalanced lifestyle.

For instance, one interviewee who looked seriously sick and tired of K-Co's hardworking

culture, thus thinking of turnover, stated as follows:

I've observed several people just crazy about working. For these workaholics, K-Co is everything, and they don't care about their families. They inhumanly work hard to survive in this company. They are just like working machines. It may be because K-Co has required so much of their work and even their life itself as well, so they're only bound to this company. But is this a really desirable life style? You know what? Even these people are always worried about being fired, though they're working to death...

Even the interviewee who had consistently showed a positive attitude towards K-Co's

hardworking culture and justified it as indispensable for rapid organizational growth during the

interview, finally admitted its limitations:

I feel like... working at K-Co is like... I'm riding a unicycle. Unless I keep moving my feet, I may fall off immediately, so I should keep going forward. It's never easy, but I can't give it up. At this extreme, I'm prone to burnout. At work, I always feel a strong pressure of hard work, which sometimes makes me very exhausted... and... it's getting tricky to get a balance between work and non-work. My friends are ready to adjust their schedules to meet me. Among them, I'm known to be a notoriously busy person.

Need for Change

During the interviews, when asked about their thinking or feeling about K-Co and K-Co

people, interviewees have continuously raised the issues of need for change. They mentioned

that although the traditionally and/or currently desired attributes of K-Co employees have

worked quite well within the past business development model—rapid growth in terms of

quantity rather than quality—but with the emerging future business paradigm that requires

"creativity," they should be changed in order to ensure sustainable organizational performance.

One interviewee clarified K-Co's need for change as follows:

> I agree that K-Co is a global leading company, but I also feel something is still missing. With regard to K-Co's manufacturing system, I'm sure K-Co is truly good at mass production and process management and K-Co can make the products with very high quality faster than any other companies. Whenever I think of K-Co, I feel the image of a company having leading cutting-edge technology is somewhat weak, though. With respect to mass production and process management, K-Co has taken the absolute No.1 position, whereas for innovative technology, K-Co doesn't hold that image. The image of "doing something smart" that Intel or IBM has, lacks at K-Co. This may be due to too much money K-Co has or K-Co's too big company size. K-Co doesn't know how to loosen. They only know how to tighten.

K-Co employees tend to diagnose that K-Co is good at technology follow-up and innovating around or with pre-existing technology, but not at creating the new technology or leading a paradigm change. An interviewee likened this current state of K-Co to an "obese kid":

> I admit this company is excellent in commercializing the mid-level, not cutting edge, technology and manufacturing. It is very well optimized to that. System operation, human resource management, organizational culture… everything. It holds the world's best know-how in that sense. Yet… something like market-leading technology, software-driven… creativity… in this sense, this company seems to have a long way to go. Of course it has grown up very fast and the corporate size has become really big. But I would say its internal substance is not that solid… it's just like an obese kid…

Recognizing this need for change, K-Co recently added "creativity management" and "quality-oriented management" (product quality, management quality, and human resources quality) to its management philosophy, and HR practices have been reformed to reflect the new philosophy, introducing some new HR policies such as flexible work time, free dress code, recruitment of experienced workers for diversity, and so on. However, K-Co employees seem to cast doubt on those HR policies' substantial effectiveness or impact on employees' real organizational life, perceiving the reactive and defensive image of a K-Co man based on the outdated "agricultural sincerity" tends to be still favored at the real workplaces of K-Co. At the extreme, an interviewee argued, "I feel like just a part of a large machine. I'm supposed to do

well just what I'm supposed to do." The following two quotes demonstrate the gap between what K-Co is trying to do explicitly and what is being done implicitly at K-Co:

> As a whole, K-Co is now strongly emphasizing that the espoused employee identity is the employee of creativity. A creative, positive, and challenging worker. Then, if smart and sincere, that's even better! That's what K-Co expects from its employees. The main issues that the chairperson recently raised, all center on creativity. However, what's going on in the real workplaces is... so called agricultural sincerity is still a very important virtue that K-Co employees are expected to have. Substantially this doesn't seem to have been changing. Whatever instructed, simply following it. Even though the instruction is wrong, just doing it diligently. This still underlies the K-Co culture. This inconsistency makes us employees somewhat confused. We are still implicitly forced to be sitting at our desks all day long, but I'm not sure if employees' creativity really works in this environment wherein not sitting at the desk simply means not working hard.

> Recently, K-Co seems to be emphasizing the importance of creativity management, introducing new policies, training and educating programs. But the change process is just retarded. As long as the real thoughts still haven't changed, any attempts for institutional changes are meaningless.

Many interviewees pointed out that the K-Co system/culture that has been constructed, confirmed, and reproduced throughout K-Co's long history, based on a thorough top-down control and the desired employee attributes, attitudes, and behaviors optimized for that specific system/culture may be functioning as a structural inertia that prevents the change K-Co currently needs. How the existing K-Co way and notion of the organizationally espoused employee identity could systematically hinder creative thoughts and behaviors can be seen in the following two quotes:

> In a sense, for a long time K-Co's organizational culture has evolved into the form best optimized for the top-down control and employees' fast executions. Within this form, if only some smart top leaders get good strategic insights and direction, the whole system is supposed to work well. All they need is sincere followers. Now, they keep saying that innovation and creation are highly encouraged, but in reality they actually don't like something breaking the existing rules. It's so ironic! On top of that, if trying to innovate, one should follow the *process* of innovation. The *report* on how to innovate should be submitted. Innovation just means additional paperwork!

> The most serious discrepancy here at K-Co is that although it keeps emphasizing the concept of creativity management, its culture is the farthest from the creative culture. It's

like the Roman troops. Follow me! Then everybody follows the leader without any objection. K-Co's history has been the history of taking the first place, outpacing other competitors. Of course, with this systematic and thorough control, it has achieved its goal finally. No doubt that it's a monumental accomplishment. Now, it's No. 1, and no competitor around to overtake. So, for this totally new situation, the notion of creativity has been introduced and emphasized. But seems like no one is ready enough for these new needs and trends. How can K-Co be like Google?

An interviewee exemplified how the recent organizational efforts towards creativity are re-interpreted by K-Co employees who have already been fully socialized in K-Co's traditional organizational context. See the following quote from my interview with a marketer who has previous work experience outside K-Co. It reveals how deregulation could generate a new type of regulation within the context of K-Co:

> K-Co people are likely to perceive even creativity as commanded by the top. Seems like at K-Co there is no room for creativity or diversity. Being different is not encouraged within K-Co's culture and always under public gaze. In general, B2B marketers like me need to always look neat with suiting up because facial expression and outfit have significant influence when we're meeting with the clients. I've developed my own appearance strategy, changing the color of my necktie. But under the recent policy of free dress code, many of my colleagues started to wear a blazer without a tie rather than a complete suit. And, whenever they saw me, they kept asking, "Why don't you wear a blazer?" Finally, I came to leave my necktie in my car and wear it only when I seriously need it. The episode exemplifies one facet of the K-Co culture. It's so strong and organized, but not open to diversity.

All in all, I could find that K-Co people share the notion that K-Co and K-Co man identity should change and the direction should be from the past control-oriented culture to a creativity-oriented culture. Figuratively, "We have always looked before we leap, and succeeded in most cases. But now we must escape from too much 'look.' I believe breakthrough ideas would come out when we do 'not look,'" said one interviewee. However, as many employees pointed out, currently K-Co seems to go through a "serious transition period." There exists a gap between ideal and reality, and it is also related to the gap between old and young generations within K-Co. An interviewee with 7 years of tenure put it as follows:

I'm at the boundary between old and new. People below me are very individualistic, but people above me are collectivistic and, in a sense, are the representatives of the traditional K-Co way. The gap between these two groups looks quite clear. People above me tend to blindly work hard, saying many efforts generate many results. People below me do not agree with them, arguing actually that's an inefficient way. Two different ideals are overlapping now. I think, for changing the culture to a creative direction, we need to place a greater weight on the younger people's points of view, but... now... K-Co is in a transition state. Chaos. Employees are conflicting each other: converting to the new way of creativity vs. keeping the competitive advantage based on the old way.

HOW THE ORGANIZATION EMBODIES K-CO MAN IDENTITY AT SELECTION

So far I have described how individual K-Co employees perceive the K-Co man identity. In this section, I move to the organizational side in examining the K-Co man identity. I look at K-Co's selection process and how the espoused K-Co man identity is reflected in the process. Before getting into the details of the specific selection process at K-Co, I start with discussing the identity meaning of selection presented in the previous literature.

Identity Meaning of Selection

Organizations try to select applicants who are likely to have the potential to share their values (Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly et al., 1991). During the selection process, applicants' job-related traits like skills, abilities, knowledge, and intelligence that could significantly affect both individual and organizational performances are key assessment criteria for the organization, but non-job-related characteristics such as a value or identity fit between the applicants, potential employees, and the organization are simultaneously significant (Chatman, 1991). Put differently, not only physical fit—job-related fit—but also spiritual fit—non-job-related fit— matter in the organization's selecting the right person.

The issue of spiritual fit regarding values and identities also matters from the viewpoint of individual applicants. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) argued that applicants' attraction to an organization cannot be explained solely by the basis of instrumental job/organizational attributes that are objective, concrete, and physical, such as pay, bonuses, and job characteristics. Potential applicants will also be attracted to a company on the basis of the symbolic meanings associated with a particular organization (Lievens, Decaesteker, Coetsier, & Geirnaert, 2001; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Turban & Keon, 1993). These symbolic attributes describe the job/organization in terms of subjective and intangible attributes embodied through specific organizational values and identities (e.g., innovativeness, prestige, or family-friendliness). Potential applicants are attracted to organizations, because pursuing a job in an organization that is considered to espouse specific values enables them to express parts of their self-concept (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007). The organization where one works is one of the important determinants of one's self-concept and social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Pratt, 1998), and thus going through the selection process, individuals start their identity work as an organizational member. Anderson and Ostroff (1997) even argued that the selection process may be construed as part of organizational socialization.

From both the organization's and the applicant's viewpoints, the value and identity fit at the moment of organizational entry is a significant issue, and thus the outcome of the selection process depends on a matching process by which the selector and the applicant judge if the applicant's identity fits the organizational identity (Connerley & Rynes, 1997; Herriot, 2002). In this sense, the selection process is a social situation where identities become salient (Herriot, 2002), and in a strong organizational context such as K-Co where what kind of employee identity the organization desires is distinctly defined, the identity meaning of selection becomes even

39

more salient. Actually, during my interviews with K-Co employees, several interviewees indicated this meaning of selection at K-Co. To illustrate:

> Full of docile minds... Seems like K-Co intentionally selects this type of person. From my point of view, when HR people recruit and select, though they surely consider applicants' GPA, the more significant criterion may be how obedient and ready to be loyal to K-Co the applicants are. Because so many current K-Co people belong to that type! No one objects to this company!

> I haven't seen a sort of highly unique person in this company. I feel K-Co employees' typical attribute of compliance is already confirmed at the moment of selection. I guess the K-Co aptitude test at the selection stage may be designed to systematically filter out atypical personalities... No doubt that K-Co people are so homogeneous... In a sense, this may mean K-Co is doing such a good job in selecting already prototypical K-Co men!

Details of Espoused Employee Identity

To identify how K-Co embodies the espoused employee identity—K-Co man—at its selection process, I had interviews with 4 selection staff members at K-Co and collected archival data that show the list of the questions asked to the applicants and the examples of desirable/undesirable answers. My reading of these materials suggests that K-Co selects the potential "K-Co men" from the pool of applicants based on various selection criteria, but among others, the following attributes have consistently and saliently appeared during the interviews, as espoused at K-Co.

Unique, but not unique. A selection staff said that K-Co prefers the person who is "unique about ideas, but not unique about attitudes." In other words, as the espoused traits that K-Co employees should retain and show, the ability for creative, innovative, and challenging ideas and unique expertise about products are highly welcome. However, behaviors, basic values, and communication style should not be unique: K-Co employees should be able to be flexibly mingled with and ready to cooperate with other employees, have a certain sense of

hierarchy, and be ready to accept K-Co's values and culture. In all, as the selection staff

mentioned, as desired employee attributes, "physical uniqueness" is preferred, but "spiritual

uniqueness" is not. More specifically,

> The notion of a creative employee is essentially about one's technical or intellectual
> abilities for innovation and creation, that is, for creating new knowledge and expertise
> that surpass outdated technology or pre-existing know-how/methods. Therefore, one's
> uniqueness and pursuit of improvement in terms of these physical aspects are highly
> welcome. But, attitudes or behaviors against the specific direction or vision that the
> organization, that is, the top management group seeks, are not preferred. This means if
> an applicant shows a disposition of opposition or resistance, that's not acceptable.
> Spiritual uniqueness is not welcome at K-Co.

Look-before-you-leap. Selection staff members also noted that a thorough and

meticulous personality is preferred at K-Co. They said the culture of "not accepting mistakes"

originating from the founder's management philosophy is strongly and widely spread at K-Co,

and thus K-Co employees are expected to always double-check their tasks, ceaselessly pondering

possible alternatives and defense mechanisms. Interviewees also mentioned that with the current

need for creativity and change, "challenging" or "risk taking" personalities are being gradually

added in the notion of the espoused employee identity, but the required "look-before-you-leap"

type of personality should be simultaneously met.

Performance-oriented, not relationship-oriented. K-Co prefers the person who would

fit the K-Co's performance-oriented system and culture. According to selection staff, K-Co's

HR system such as performance evaluation and promotion decision is thoroughly based on one's

performance and final real outcomes. With this manifest and objective link between one's

performance and HR decisions, any political behaviors including non-work-related relationships

building with one's supervisors are strictly prohibited. Any bribes or gifts given to the people in

the higher ranks do not affect appraisal/promotion decisions, as one informant said, "At K-Co, a

gift could come from the boss to the subordinate, but never vice versa." A selection staff pointed

out that K-Co's strong orientation towards performance is essentially associated with its utter

capitalistic ideology of management:

> K-Co is based on the absolute capitalistic logic—the profits are raison d'être of a
> company. Here, everything centers on profit maximization. In terms of HR, this means
> only the employees who make real contributions to the company's profits are qualified to
> receive good appraisal and compensation. For bad performance, bad HR results. No
> other reasons. That's clear.

Thus, to live up to this organization's culture and philosophy, one's organizational life

should center on maximizing performance, and personalities need to be tailored to fit this

organizational context.

Ready to thank the company. At K-Co, too individualistic personality is not acceptable.

As a selection staff noted, "Although K-Co doesn't expect such an extreme attitude from its

employees as "the employee should make every sacrifice for the company," the mindset like "the

company should do every favor for the employees" is not accepted. This value espoused in K-

Co is associated with what K-Co calls the "free-unionism" policy—making the organizational

environment so comfortable that people do not need a union. In all four interviews with

selection staff members, they mentioned that the issue regarding this free-unionism policy is

always considered as a very significant factor at selection. One interviewee said:

> In a sense, an applicant's viewpoint on unionism would be the key at the selection
> decision. Other issues, directly or indirectly, are all related to this union issue. To be
> selected, applicants should not be against this policy unique at K-Co. A desired attitude
> regarding unionism would be "Unionism is not necessary at K-Co because of K-Co's
> sound employment relations based on this company's enough efforts for better working
> conditions and welfare for its employees." "K-Co structurally bans unionization" is not a
> preferred answer.

The value congruence between organization and individual in terms of unionism seems to

be a very important and sensitive concern at K-Co, and this free-unionism policy implicitly

imposes on K-Co employees the behavioral ideal of putting the collective—organization—first,

and then individual. K-Co employees are expected to focus more on what the organization has done for them than on what the organization has not done for them.

Selection at K-Co

In order to maximize personnel selection effectiveness, selection criteria need to move beyond matching individuals to immediate job requirements, and consider organizational goals, policies, and culture (Olian & Rynes, 1984; Schneider, 1983). Applicants' characteristics need to be evaluated in terms of organizational compatibility, and thus their values, attitudes, and behavioral styles should be aligned with organizational objectives and directions. At K-Co, in order to select the applicants who show the potential to be well aligned with K-Co's organizational goals and directions, its selection process is systematically designed. Through all steps of the selection process, the organizationally espoused employee attributes become more and more salient, so the applicants, following the process, are expected to get a concrete and clear sense of the prototypical employee identity at K-Co. In this sense, selection at K-Co has the meaning as an initial reification of the K-Co man identity.

Basically, K-Co's selection process is separately tailored for two different groups of applicants according to their employment history—neophyte workers and experienced workers. Neophyte workers refer to recent college graduates having no work experience, whereas experienced workers refer to the workers who have work experience in other companies before applying to K-Co. A selection process needs to be designed and operated in substantially different ways across different types of vacancies, applicants, and markets (Rynes & Barber, 1990), and making distinctions between college graduates and experienced workers is a critical issue in terms of achieving selection effectiveness (Rynes, Orlitzky, & Bretz, 1997). Work history often exerts a strong effect on self-concept (Spenner & Otto, 1985), and thus experienced

workers tend to construct their new work identities in a new organization based on their past organizational and occupational experiences (Beyer & Hannah, 2002), while college graduates do not. This implies that selecting experienced workers whose extant individual work identities may overlap, complement, or conflict with the identity of the new organization should be differentiated from selecting college graduates whose work identities have not been concretely framed yet. Accordingly, how strongly selectors apply the lens of the organizationally espoused employee identity to selection decisions needs to be resilient between these two groups of applicants. Below, I describe the details of the selection process at K-Co—how goals and ways of selection are differentiated between these two groups and how the K-Co man identity is embodied differentially during the two types of selection processes.

Selection of College Graduates

Goals of selection. As a selection staff noted, the essential goal pursued at the selection of college graduates is "selecting people with the potential of being a general manager or a future CEO of K-Co," and thus "how much and well the applicant would be able to share the organizational values and norms" is the key criterion for selecting new members. The primary selection focus is given to the future potential rather than to the current technical know-how they hold, with the notion that K-Co can "re-educate" these people and foster ideal workers through a series of education and training programs after their entry to the organization. The following quote from a selection staff reveals how important an applicant's spiritual qualification is in selecting college graduates:

> College graduates selection is based on the notion like drawing a picture on a piece of white paper, that is, fostering a prototypical K-Co man from the zero state. So we select the people who show the spiritual potential to become a K-Co man through subsequent education and training. The potential value congruence between individual and K-Co is the key in the selection decision.

Ways of selection. The recruitment of college graduates is based on a mass recruitment (also called "fishing net" recruitment) twice a year. A wide-open pool of college graduates apply to K-Co, and the selection process for them is composed of three steps, which are (1) document review, (2) K-Co aptitude test, and (3) interviews.

First, at the step of document review, applicants' basic information such as date of birth, gender, education, English test score, hobbies, role models, a letter of self-introduction, and the like is collected. As for education, the applicants should provide the information like one's major(s), GPA, and the detailed list of courses one took at the university.

Second, the applicants who have passed the document review step should take the K-Co aptitude test. This test has been developed by the psychologists at K-Co, and it consists of three parts. The first part tests applicants' academic intelligence in the areas of verbal, mathematical, analytical, and spatio-perceptual abilities. This part is based on GMA (general mental ability) constructs (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998) and purports to check applicants' basic intellectual abilities. The second part covers the questions to test applicants' practical intelligence. This part is composed of the situational judgment test that presents applicants with work-related situations and asks them to indicate their behavioral choices, and the common sense test that examines applicants' knowledge on current social issues and events. The third part of the K-Co aptitude test is the personality test that investigates applicants' dispositions, characters, values, and personalities that would affect their organizational life. Selection staff members mentioned that the effectiveness of this K-Co-specific aptitude test has a significant meaning in K-Co's selection process. Specifically, they said that this test—especially, part 2 (situational judgment and common sense test) and part 3 (personality test)—has significant effects in terms of filtering out the people who would not fit K-Co's management philosophy and organizational culture, thus

leaving only the people having the potential to be what K-Co wants them to be, that is, taking the people holding the specific personal attributes to be a prototypical K-Co man.

Third, the applicants who passed the K-Co aptitude test move to the interview step. These applicants go through three different types of structured interviews, which are a presentation interview on technical skills, a group discussion interview, and a committee interview. At the presentation interview, each applicant is given certain problems related to one's major, and prepares his or her opinion on those problems based on their major knowledge and expertise. Then each applicant presents it in front of interviewers, and finally interviewers ask various questions regarding the presentation and estimate the applicant's cognitive ability, knowledge on major, and problem solving skills. At the group discussion interview, a pool of 5~10 applicants discuss a specific issue given, and interviewers observe and evaluate what each applicant argues and how each one reacts to others during the discussion. Both the applicant's knowledge and communication skills are estimated during this interview process. Finally, at the committee interview, the applicant's personality is the key checkpoint. Before this step of interview, a detailed list of questions and example answers—both appropriate/desired and inappropriate/ undesired answers—is provided to the interviewers. The applicant's personal attributes including individual values, loyalty, philosophy of business and work, manners, interpersonal relationships, etc. are comprehensively assessed. Selection staff members stated that this last step of interview tends to be regarded as more important than the previous two types of interviews, because it is most directly related to the main criterion of college graduates selection—"how much and well the applicant would be able to share the organizational values and norms."

All in all, K-Co's selection process for college graduates is structured to examine both technical/physical and mental/spiritual aspects of applicants. As described above, both K-Co aptitude test and interview processes are designed to cover these two aspects. However, a selection staff pointed out that, in the case of college graduates selection, a greater weight tends to be placed on the latter aspect. Throughout various steps of selection process, K-Co intends to hire college graduates ready to be a K-Co man, which means an applicants' *spiritual fit* to K-Co's organizational culture and identity, that is, the *value congruence* between individual and organization is a salient and significant issue in selecting college graduates. At the gate of K-Co, the organizationally espoused employee identity is initially reified and imposed on the students who are about to change their identity into a worker.

Selection of Experienced Workers

Traditionally, K-Co has kept the logic of the internal labor market (Doeringer & Piore, 1971), and hiring has been constrained to entry-level positions filled by new college graduates. So called "purebred-ism"—new graduates are strongly preferred over experienced workers and employees are nurtured and socialized with the K-Co specific ways throughout their career paths—has been a dominant regime in K-Co's HR practices. However, due to the rapid technology and business environment changes, K-Co has modified this regime, and currently K-Co is actively hiring experienced workers in order to meet the urgent technical needs. As of 2009, this new demographic group at K-Co makes up almost 40% of its employees.

Goals of selection. The basic goals of experienced workers selection lie in selecting people with specific technical skills and expertise in needs. As one selection staff clarified, "When K-Co launches a new business, we need to select people holding new technical skills and know-how that the current K-Co employees do not have. Or when K-Co suddenly expands

preexisting business areas, we also need new workers with certain technical skills to complement

the extant workforce." Organizations often seek new employees holding prior relevant work

experiences with the belief that these newcomers will quickly contribute to an organization's

productivity and performance because of their previous knowledge and skill sets (Kirschenbaum,

1992). Likewise, K-Co's selection of experienced workers is a reaction to a technical emergency

call: "We prefer people whose technical expertise can be immediately used to gain competitive

advantages in the markets, rather than those who need certain processes of education and training

before fully revealing their capacity," said another selection staff.

Different from the case of college graduates, in the selection process of experienced

workers, the sense of fostering a K-Co man seems to be relatively weak. The primary

checkpoint in selecting new workers is given to the physical/practical necessity—whether the

applicant can make real technical contributions to K-Co—and how the applicant would fit K-

Co's values and culture is likely to be of secondary priority. A selection staff mentioned:

> We selectors know that experienced workers' primary concern is what they benefit from
> K-Co. They seem to mainly put emphasis on the expected increasing values of
> themselves in the labor markets with the fact that they have worked at K-Co. They are
> seeking the one line in their résumé that tells they have work experience in a good
> company like K-Co! So, we do not select experienced workers with the notion of
> selecting a future general manager at K-Co. We don't much expect them to be
> prototypical K-Co men. Only a technical fit matters. Utilitarianism works here.

However, as the number of experienced workers has continuously increased, although

still applicants' physical aspects are regarded as more important than their spiritual aspects in

selecting experienced workers, the selection focus is more and more incorporating spiritual

features. One selection staff pointed out:

> In the past, the focus of recruiting experienced workers centered on buying their
> specialties, and these experienced workers only had a technical meaning within the
> organization context of K-Co. But currently K-Co people are likely to perceive that
> experienced workers compose a significant part of K-Co employees' demography. This

means that experienced workers hold a social meaning as well. As a result, the emphasis at selection is not only given to satisfying immediate technical needs, but also to coordination needs. That is, how experienced workers co-work, cooperate, or coordinate with other preexisting organizational members is becoming an important issue.

How to coordinate with the preexisting organizational members is closely related to how to fit into the preexisting organizational culture. This issue of accommodation becomes even more salient because most experienced workers take high rank positions after entry and they are supposed to be a leader of a team mostly composed of K-Co members who have been nurtured in the K-Co culture since their college graduation. Accordingly, selection staff members at K-Co are sharing the notion that the idea of selecting people who would fit K-Co's organizational culture and identity, to some degree, should apply to the selection of experienced workers as well. In addition, an interviewee said that experienced workers' spiritual fit with the K-Co culture is crucial also because "technical needs change very fast with rapid technological development, which means those technical needs some experienced workers have might depreciate fast, and so, in the long term, their personality factors would be as important as or even more important than their technical factors for their organizational life."

Yet, how intensely the lens of spiritual fit should be applied to the selection of experienced workers does not seem to have an easy answer, as long as this demographically diverse group of experienced workers is expected to contribute to K-Co in terms of boosting "new" and "creative" perspectives and increasing the notion of "change." As a selection staff put it,

> We know that experienced workers could be the source of diversity and creativity. And it is true that a more liberal organizational climate and culture are being gradually infused by this group of people. I feel that the former cultural homogeneity at K-Co is not as strong, and this would be a good sign in terms of stimulating employees' creativity. But, we see increasing conflicts between the boss having the traditional expectation of a corporate culture and the subordinate experienced worker. How to find the balance

between the old and the new looks very challenging. That's the biggest issue that the K-Co HR currently faces.

Ways of selection. The basic format of recruiting experienced workers is recruitment on demand (also called "target" recruitment). Job openings are available any time the organization needs, and detailed descriptions of the specific jobs and titles are provided. The selection process for experienced workers is composed of two steps, which are (1) document review and (2) interviews.

First, at the step of document review, applicants' basic information such as date of birth, gender, education, and so on is collected. Applicants also attach their résumé that shows the details of their work experiences, including previous jobs and companies they were in.

Second, the applicants who have passed the document review step move directly to the interview step. In the selection process of experienced workers, applicants do not take the K-Co aptitude test. Applicants go through two types of interviews, which are a presentation interview on technical skills and a committee interview. At the presentation interview, the applicant's technical specialties and expertise and how professionally and timely they meet the organization's specific needs are minutely examined. The applicant's performance and outcomes achieved in the previous workplaces are analyzed in detail. At the committee interview, like the selection of college graduates, the applicant's personality is the main checkpoint. It seems that basically there are no significant differences in the criteria for assessing applicants' personalities between college graduates and experienced workers. However, in the case of experienced workers, the primary focus is likely to be on the applicant's skills of interpersonal relationships and leadership rather than on the applicant's fundamental values, philosophy, and loyalty. In other words, as one selection staff noted, "How well the applicant would be mingled with the preexisting members is a slightly more important criterion

than how much the applicant would be able to share the organizational values and norms." This implies that K-Co does not necessarily expect that experienced workers become prototypical K-Co men, but K-Co expects that, at least, they can be in harmony with other K-Co men and assimilate to the K-Co culture to some degree.

In conclusion, K-Co's selection process for experienced workers is, like the selection of college graduates, structured to investigate both technical/physical and mental/spiritual aspects of applicants—the presentation interview covers the former, while the committee interview covers the latter. However, a greater weight is likely to be given to the physical aspects, and thus how the specific professional expertise one holds can actually satisfy the organization's specific technical needs and finally contribute to organizational performance is the key criterion in the selection decision. This indicates that an applicant's *physical fit* to K-Co's organizational needs, that is, the *technical specialty congruence* between individual and organization is a salient and significant issue in selecting experienced workers. However, applicants' spiritual fit to K-Co's organizational culture and identity, which is the primary criterion for selecting college graduates, is becoming gradually significant in selecting experienced workers. One selection staff illustrated this notion as follows:

> There were several cases like an experienced worker with a very high level of technical skills ran away from K-Co with K-Co's core technologies. These accidents raised the debates on the importance of personality-related factors in selecting experienced workers. Recently, both technical specialties and personalities tend to be regarded as simultaneously important. Even a person with cutting-edge technology skills is not selected if he or she does not cross the bar of personality check.

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I pictured the details of the K-Co man identity, the espoused employee identity at K-Co. Based on the interviews with the current K-Co employees, I analyzed this

concept of K-Co man, as *individual* employees perceive it—what characterizes this strong

employee identity in K-Co employees' perceptions and how the identity is evaluated by K-Co

employees. K-Co employees described the salient common attributes of the people at their own

workplaces as homogeneously docile, fit for system and perfectionism, extremely hardworking

and loyal to the company. They also argued that this picture of K-Co people originates from K-

Co's strong culture and identity based on K-Co's traditional management philosophy and

system—seeking for perfectionism/excellence and top-down organizational control—that may

have worked effectively in the past business model aiming at fast growth and development, but it

needs to change in order to fit the future business model that requires a bottom-up approach

based on individual employees' creativity.

This need for change, actually, has been projected on the K-Co man identity that the

organization espouses. The interviews with selection staff members at K-Co revealed that,

currently, at the stage of selection wherein the organizationally espoused employee identity is

initially but concretely reified, K-Co intentionally seeks "unique" people of creativity and

diversity. However, other traits of the espoused K-Co man identity that selection staff members

at K-Co hold—spiritually not unique, look-before-you-leap, performance-oriented, and ready to

thank the company—do not necessarily fit the future business needs, still staying optimized to

the traditional model. It seems that in the current organizational ideal of the K-Co man identity,

there still is not enough room for employees' individualities to be actively expressed. After all,

the prototypical K-Co man identity as individual employees perceive it and the K-Co man

identity as the organization espouses it at selection are substantially the same: K-Co man is the

identity of an employee who best fits the top-down control and culture of K-Co.

In fact, with its traditional emphasis on the importance of human resources in the management philosophy, "people and talent first," K-Co has put a lot of resources into selecting the people having the potential to be the organizationally espoused employees, and K-Co's own aptitude test would be one example of K-Co's huge investment in its selection system. Recently, K-Co revised its management philosophy centered on "creativity management," and in line with this update, K-Co's selection system has been newly structured. Especially, when selecting experienced workers, K-Co has tried to put more emphasis on, rather than on the traditional K-Co man spirit, the newly espoused attributes of K-Co employees and culture: the state-of-the-art technical insights and the culture of diversity that experienced workers are expected to bring to K-Co, their effects on the preexisting K-Co members by stimulating their individualities and creativity, and finally, possibly, a new K-Co organizational culture of creativity and innovation.

Yet, in the process of selecting college graduates, the applicants' *spiritual fit* or *value congruence*—whether applicants would fit the K-Co man identity, which is not fully updated, thus still holding the traditional behavioral ideal—is still the primary issue. Moreover, even in the process of selecting experienced workers, where the applicants' *physical fit* or *technical specialty congruence* is the key criterion, the applicants' spiritual fit is gradually becoming an important consideration. These phenomena imply how difficult it is to change the espoused employee identity in a strong cultural context. Cultural persistence (Zucker, 1977) or habit (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) is a significant challenge in organizational culture and identity change (Meyerson & Martin, 1987).

All in all, the empirical evidence of substantial consistency between current K-Co employees' individual perceptions of the K-Co man identity and the organizational notion of the K-Co man identity at selection indicates that selection is a significant stage as an initial

reification of the organizationally espoused employee identity. This also implies that employees' identities could be significantly managed from the moment of organizational entry. Depending on which organizational values and norms the selection process is conceptually based on (e.g., how to define the espoused K-Co man identity as a criterion for selecting people) and how the selection process is actually structured with its concrete selection tools to reflect those values and norms (e.g., how to project the K-Co man identity on the K-Co aptitude test), the selection stage can have an important identity meaning.

CHAPTER 3

K-Co Man at the Camp:

Newcomer Training Program as Igniting

Organizational Identification

This chapter is about the second stage of employees' identity dynamics, the training stage. Specifically, I look at K-Co's 4-week newcomer training program that all newcomers must go through before they start work, and examine how organizational identification is ignited through this early socialization process. Theoretically, I use this training program as empirical evidence for exploring the process of organizational identification. As presented in Chapter 1, although previous literature has shown plenty of empirical findings on the consequences resulting from organizational identification, through which *process* organizational identification emerges has not been adequately identified. In their recent review on organizational identification, Ashforth et al. (2008) suggested that research on the process of organizational identification is a "low-hanging fruit" (p. 346) for future research, and thus this chapter aims to pick up this fruit.

In order to identify this process, I start with the notion that there are two agents involved in identity work in the organization, namely, the individual and the organization. The process of organizational identification is reified through the interplay between these two agents (Ashforth et al., 2008), and thus it is necessary to consider both of them simultaneously in order to draw a complete picture of how organizational identification emerges. Theories to date, however, have tended to focus on one or the other of these two agents. In discussing identity work in the organization, the organizational identification literature, largely dominated by organizational psychologists, tends to primarily focus on *individual agency*. It assumes individuals' active identity construction ("identification—with organizations or anything else—is an active process by which individuals link themselves to elements in the social scene" (Cheney, 1983, p. 342)), paying less attention to the organization's influential actions on individuals' identity work. Thus, to fill the gap, I bring the organizational socialization literature. It also deals with identity issues

in the organization—how an individual's incoming identity is rebuilt to the espoused identity constructed in an organizational context (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Saks & Ashforth, 1997; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979)—but tends to focus on *organizational agency*. This literature, largely dominated by organizational sociologists, primarily examines how an organization affects individuals' identity work using a number of socialization tactics (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), often regarding individuals as relatively passive recipients of a process initiated by the organization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Harrison, 2007). Therefore, in this chapter, I pursue a deeper understanding of identity and identification by drawing on and bridging both bodies of literature. In other words, I derive a multi-level explanation (Klein, Tosi, & Cannella, 1999) on the process of organizational identification, taking a balanced perspective on both the organizational and individual sides and their dynamic interaction in identity work.

The data of K-Co's 4-week newcomer training program I collected for this study includes both organizational- and individual-side data, and it covers both qualitative and quantitative data. First, I collected interview data from both trainers and trainees. An exploratory analysis of these interviews provided insights on the interplay between organization and individuals. Interviews with trainers identified how the agents of the *organization* seek to impose an espoused employee identity on newcomers (thus strengthening their organizational identification) through institutionalized socialization tactics (Jones, 1986). Interviews with trainees provided information on how each *individual* trainee reacts to this institutionalized socialization process and develops distinctive ways towards organizational identification through interactions with multiple sources of socialization agents (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003) in the training program—mentor and team members. Second, based on the interview data and extant literature, I generated a set of hypotheses about organizational identification as achieved through individual

identifications with multiple socialization agents in the training program. Finally, I tested these hypotheses using the longitudinal quantitative data generated by a pre- and post-training survey, responded to by 90 trainees.

According to the interview data from trainers and trainees, the role of two socialization agents—mentor and team—was found salient in increasing trainees' organizational identification under this organization's institutionalized socialization tactics embedded in its newcomer training program. The subsequent quantitative analysis with the survey data, however, revealed the differential role that each socialization agent plays in the process towards trainees' organizational identification: identification with the mentor plays a key role in fostering higher organizational identification, but identification with team members does not. The implication of this finding and how it relates to previous work on organizational socialization and organizational identification will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

THEORY AND LITERATURE

Organizational Socialization

At organizational entry, individuals, as naïve newcomers, engage in sensemaking of new environments. They must acquire social knowledge of the specific organizational context (e.g., values, expected behaviors, culture, etc.) in order to assume an organizational role and participate as an organizational member (Louis, 1980; Van Maanen, 1976). Sensemaking during organizational socialization is a thinking process in which newcomers create, modify, or maintain personal identities through interactions with insiders, and thus build a situational definition of their identities (Katz, 1980; Pratt, 2000). Since newcomers' self-conceptions are situated in and constructed through social interactions within the organization (Van Maanen,

58

1979), newcomers are susceptible to the power of the socialization process driven by the organization. To manage the "reality shock" (Louis, 1980) of joining a new organization, newcomers need to clarify their situational identities by securing the approval of others (Wanous, 1992) and through learning their work roles (Feldman, 1976). In other words, the main argument of organizational socialization theories is that the organization, by defining the situational context, can shape or mold newcomers' behavioral responses and, in turn, their identities.

Socialization tactics. The concept of socialization tactics, defined as "the ways in which the experiences of individuals in transition from one role to another are structured for them by others in the organization" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 230), is also in line with the organizational socialization literature's relative emphasis on organizational agency[4]. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) outline six tactics that organizations use to structurally influence newcomers in orienting themselves to their new role identities. Those are collective vs. individual; formal vs. informal; sequential vs. random; fixed vs. variable; serial vs. disjunctive; investiture vs. divestiture tactics (these tactics will be explained in more detail later in this chapter). Subsequently, based on Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) typology, Jones (1986) categorized collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture tactics as "institutionalized" socialization that represents a formalized development program in order that newcomers adopt pre-established organizational roles, assuming role "custodianship." He also categorized another six tactics (individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics) as "individualized" socialization that represents an absence of a formal

[4] There certainly is a socialization literature that, focusing on newcomer proactivity, emphasizes the tactics taken by individual newcomers (e.g., surveillance, feedback seeking, etc.), not by the organization. However, empirical evidence (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) has shown that those individual tactics are seldom effective in organizational socialization processes (Moreland & Levine, 2001).

developmental program, so that newcomers hold discretion in developing their own approaches to their roles, thus "innovating" roles.

The socialization tactics of investiture or divestiture are especially critical in discussing identity-related issues, because they are constructed to either confirm or disconfirm a newcomer's incoming identity (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Actually, whether investiture falls into institutionalized socialization or into individualized socialization is debatable (Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2007)—even Jones himself states that this is "not clear a priori" (1986, p. 265). Jones (1986) construed investiture as social support given to newcomers by experienced organizational members and put it in the category of institutionalized socialization. However, according to Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) original conceptualization, investiture is simply the affirmation of a newcomer's incoming identity ("we like you just as you are"), so it is more likely to be in the category of individualized socialization. Ashforth, Saks, and Lee (1997) found that the correlation between investiture and other tactics in institutionalized socialization is only weak when measured as reflecting Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) notion. My analysis of the interview data with trainers at K-Co will provide empirical evidence to resolve this theoretical disagreement by showing what this organization intends to achieve with trainees through its newcomer training program, with which socialization tactics.

Organizational Identification

The organizational socialization literature, usually dominated by organizational sociologists, tends to say little about how individuals actively use identity-related information in constructing their own identities in the workplace (Pratt et al., 2006). In contrast, the organizational identification literature, largely dominated by organizational psychologists, tends to focus more on individual agency.

Social identity theory and self-categorization theory define social identity as part of the individual's self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). In an organizational setting, the social group that individuals perceive themselves to belong to is the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Individuals identify with the organization due to their affiliation needs—human nature's innate fundamental "need to belong" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995)—and, more importantly, self-enhancement needs: organizational attributes perceived by an individual as positive enhance the organizational member's self-worth by providing status and prestige (Pratt, 1998).

Multiple foci of identification. The vast majority of the organizational identification literature has implicitly regarded an organization as a holistic construct. However, normally an organization embodies differentiated systems, and many kinds of sub-groups and sub-identities are embedded within it. This implies that several kinds of nested identities an individual views as self-defining co-exist and multiple foci of identification may occur under an organizational umbrella (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; Bartels, Pruyn, Jong, & Joustra, 2007; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000; Riketta & van Dick, 2005). Individuals tend to identify more strongly with lower levels of identity foci (e.g., team) than with higher levels of identity foci (e.g., organization) because, in their daily work environment, lower identity foci are perceived more salient, concrete, and proximal (Bartels et al., 2007; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Also, in their meta-analysis, Riketta and van Dick (2005) showed that identification with a particular focus correlates more strongly with potential outcomes toward the same focus. Team-related variables such as satisfaction with co-workers or supervisors and team climate perceptions are closely related to workgroup identification, while organization-related variables such as satisfaction with the organization and intentions to leave the organization are strongly related to

61

organizational identification. Ullrich, Wieseke, Christ, Schulze, and van Dick (2007) theorized this parallel notion of multiple identifications as the "identity-matching principle."

Thus far, however, scholars have paid most attention to differentiating each level of focus and developing parallel models of identification at multiple levels of foci, leaving the simultaneity and mutual interrelatedness of these various foci unexamined (Sluss & Ashforth, 2008). The present study thus examines the integrating mechanisms of cross-level identification foci. Specifically, by analyzing data from trainees, I will identify how lower level foci of identification (mentor and team members) are related to a higher level focus of identification (organization) through the newcomer training program at K-Co.

METHODS: QUALITATIVE DATA

K-Co has an intensive and elaborate 4-week newcomer training program that all newcomers [college graduates][5] at K-Co *must* go through before they start work. The strength and clarity of K-Co's espoused values and the intensity of its newcomer training process make it an ideal case for studying the socialization and identity formation processes. This case selection corresponds with the notion that in inductive research it makes sense to select extreme cases where the process of interest is transparently observable (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994).

Data collection. This study's interest lies in the interplay between individuals and organizations. I thus collected interview data from both the organization side (trainers) and the individual side (trainees) to gain insights into (a) how the training program is purposed and designed by the *organization* and (b) how *individuals* react to their training experiences. I

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[5] Actually, K-Co operates two different types of newcomer training program—the 4-week newcomer training program for college graduates and the 2-week newcomer training program for experienced workers—as they have two different types of selection process. I was trying to collect the data on both newcomer training programs, but the training staff at K-Co did not permit me to get the data on the 2-week newcomer training program, only permitting the 4-week newcomer training program.

interviewed 6 trainers and 6 trainees. Interviews ranged between one hour and 3 hours, and these were open-ended interviews. I followed Spradley's (1979) method by beginning with broad questions, and as the interview progressed, narrowing down the questions and probing for more detail and clarification.

The trainers whom I interviewed are employees of the Human Resource Development (HRD) Center at K-Co and are all involved in planning and executing the training programs. I asked each trainer to describe the training program (goals, content, format, tactics, etc.) and the interactions between trainers and trainees, and to spell out what the concept of "K-Co man" means. The trainees I interviewed, technically, when interviewed, were not trainees any more because I interviewed them *after* they completed the training program. That is, these interviews were conducted retrospectively. This was due to the very exclusive nature of K-Co's HR policies (especially with its newcomer training program): outsider's contact with trainees during the training period is strictly prohibited[6]. I asked the trainees the same sorts of questions that I asked the trainers, but I asked each trainee to describe "what he or she, as a trainee, perceived and felt" about the goals, content, format, and tactics of the training program, the concept of "K-Co man," and the interactions between trainers and trainees and, additionally, among trainees. In addition to the interview data, I gathered archival data including training manuals distributed to every trainee and a DVD that provided a summary of events taking place during the training program.

Data analysis. Half of the interviews were recorded on audiotape and transcribed verbatim, but the other half of the interviewees did not allow me to record the interview due to

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[6] Luckily enough, I could administer the survey responded to by trainees for my quantitative analysis (described later in this chapter), but the training staff kept saying this was a very exceptional permission. Even upon permission, a very strict procedure was executed: actually, I just sent the survey to the training staff, and they, instead of me, distributed and collected the survey, which means there was no direct contact between trainees and me.

privacy issues, so I tried to transcribe as much as possible during the interview and created the log on the interview as soon after the interview as possible. Once the data were collected, I scanned them for dominant themes. This preliminary form of data analysis provided me with the basic sense on the similarities and differences across the informants. I found that the information from trainers, as representatives of the organization, is mostly about the objective facts about HR policies, thus does not reveal much variance across the interviews, whereas the information from trainees presents interesting variance since it is about the individual's subjective perceptions and feelings about the training experience. As such, I employed two different ways of data analysis: (a) for the data from the trainers, I systematically summarized the information, identifying the common themes and (b) for the data from the trainees, I followed open coding procedures to develop conceptual labels, following the iterative process recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984). I used ATLAS.ti software to enter all codes, find the code families, and facilitate coding links.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND FORMULATING HYPOTHESES

Organizational Agency: Socialization Tactics and Espoused Identity

Socialization is an ongoing process, but organizational members are particularly susceptible to the organization's social influences during their early stages of membership (Berlew & Hall, 1966). At K-Co, the newcomer training program is regarded by all I interviewed as a very critical HR practice. K-Co has made enormous investment in this training program. The company runs 13 training and education facilities inside and outside Korea. My interviews with trainers revealed detailed information on what K-Co intends to achieve through its newcomer training program. One trainer summarized its aim as "teaching trainees how to

start their careers at K-Co from the bottom, through understanding K-Co, understanding the philosophy of doing business, and building teamwork and a challenging spirit." The intention to render K-Co's espoused employee identity salient and attractive, thus fostering "K-Co men," underlies the whole social learning process. The notion that "doing" often leads to "becoming" (Ashforth, 1998) holds here. Below, I present my analysis of the interview data with trainers. I found the socialization tactics used at K-Co well fits the framework developed by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Jones (1986).

Context of socialization: Collective and formal tactics. During the training program, trainees stay together in 8 training camps spread all over Korea for 4 weeks. They are restricted from external contact (only two days off are available during the entire training period), and almost every minute (from 6 AM to later than 1 AM) of the 4 weeks is planned. Each training camp accommodates 200 trainees, so, in total, 1,600 newcomers are trained in 8 training camps at a time. All training activities are team-based (in each training camp 8 teams are formed, and each team is composed of 25 members): they go through various challenging outdoor trainings, K-Co themed mass performances, and team projects on business (K-Co product development, sales, etc.) together. Trainers argued that this training program systematically encourages trainees' active participation and various inter-team competitions stimulate social and organizational learning, thereby inducing "highly intimate and deep interactions" among the team members. Experience sharing and mutual influence in this *collective* (as opposed to individual) context are expected to generate homogeneity of verbal and behavioral patterns desired in that specific context. As a trainer said,

> The essence of collective training lies in the fact that everybody is changed by the influence of others. Trainees share their experiences and influence each other through exclusive and deep interactions over 4 weeks. These collective processes gradually

65

generate common sets of behavioral patterns espoused at K-Co, resulting in a homogeneous and cohesive culture.

In other words, interactions and bonding among newcomers engendered during the training period are supposed to reinforce the definition of the situation offered by K-Co, thus forming the basis for infusing a collective identity as "K-Co men." These characteristics of the collective socialization tactics found in the newcomer training program at K-Co fit the description of collective tactics by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) such that "collective socialization programs are usually found in organizations… where the organization desires to build a collectivistic sense of identity, solidarity, and loyalty within the cohort group being socialized" (p. 234).

Another important contextual trait regarding the newcomer training program is that it is conducted before the employees start work. This means newcomers are put through a specific set of experiences tailored explicitly for them, separated from the day-to-day reality of the work setting and regular organizational members (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Hence, through this *formal* (as opposed to informal) socialization process in a specific time and place completely segregated from the real work setting, which recalls the "cultural island" metaphor (Eriksen, 1993), newcomers share values, attitudes, languages, and appropriate behavioral norms associated with their new role identities at K-Co. Trainers said:

> The primary aim of the newcomer training program lies in a general spiritual education rather than a specific education of job-related knowledge and skills. The program content is based on educating the essence of K-Co such as K-Co's history, management philosophy, core values, and culture. It purports to deliver the instructions on basic and essential employee attitudes espoused at K-Co, by educating business etiquette, communication skills, creative problem solving, challenging spirit, teamwork, global mind, and so on.

> This training program is a good opportunity to form the collective identity as K-Co employees before newcomers separately start real work in each affiliate of K-Co to which they will belong.

Throughout the training period, trainees do not learn about the physical work itself, but they are expected to learn about the spiritual work ethic espoused by K-Co (e.g., the perfectionist and hardworking culture of K-Co). Formal tactics, coupled with collective tactics, stimulate newcomers to take positive attitudes towards K-Co and accept the "K-Co man" identity both cognitively and emotionally.

Social aspects of socialization: Serial and divestiture tactics. Trainers emphasized that the key factor that characterizes K-Co's newcomer training program is the significant role that mentors play during the whole training period. A mentor is assigned to each team (so there are 8 mentors in one training camp), and the mentor is intended to function as a leader of the team, a facilitator of the program, and, most importantly, a deliverer of K-Co's values and know-how by telling visions and showing exemplary attributes of a K-Co man to trainees. These experienced organizational members serve as role models for new recruits so that trainees can gain a concrete sense of the future by seeing an image of themselves in the organization, based on the behavior of their "predecessors" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). As a trainer described,

> Above all, a mentor's mindset is very important in the training program. A mentor serves as a role model. The system of direct guidance of juniors by seniors during the training period is the core way for fostering and keeping trainees' loyalty towards their firm. This kind of a spiritual link between seniors and juniors plays a significant role in imprinting or infusing the notion of what a K-Co man should be like. The perception of we-ness between mentor and trainee is truly important. This mentoring system is a very K-Co-specific way of doing newcomer training.

Mentors are selected from the pool of excellent employees with 3~5 years of tenure from any departments—not necessarily the HR department—and any affiliates within K-Co, based on their current performance at work and their past performance during the newcomer training program. They must complete a 2-week training program specified for mentors before they join the newcomer training program. Always staying very close to trainees, mentors are supposed to

embody the espoused identity of a "K-Co man," using concrete identity cues (e.g., attire,

behavior, attitude, language, display of hardworking, etc.). As a trainer described,

> Mentors are always ready to take the initiative and set an example. They go to bed later and wake up earlier than the trainees, and they provide feedback on trainees' journals every day, trying to communicate with each of them. Every move of the mentor sets an example, affecting trainees' thoughts and feelings.

Deep interactions with and help from the mentor are expected to lead trainees to

internalize K-Co's core values, elevate loyalty towards K-Co, and become a "K-Co man." In

other words, through these *serial* (as opposed to disjunctive) processes of socialization between

senior and junior, mentors enact their identity as a conduit that connects newcomers to K-Co[7].

K-Co is known to hold a strong organizational identity and culture, keeping some central,

distinctive, and enduring attributes of organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985), which are, for

example, strictly systematic processes of work and an extremely hardworking culture.

According to trainers, the most common values at K-Co can be summarized by keywords like

"systematic", "well-organized", "perfect", or minutely established "processes."

> The company founder's pursuit of perfection in every aspect of the business process was summarized by his words that "to build an insufficient enterprise is the equivalent of a crime." His idea of perfection is based on thorough preparation and responsibility at every stage in the business process, while his pursuit of "completion" referred to full dedication in maintaining the quality of products, services and business management. This completion, which required autonomy and responsibility at every level, was a leading force in K-Co's corporate growth[8].

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[7] The concept of mentor in this newcomer training context may not exactly correspond with Kram's (1985) mentor role theory, where mentors can provide career development functions and psychosocial functions. In this 4-week training program's specific setting, there seem to be no career development functions in the mentor-trainee relationships. However, in terms of psychosocial functions, mentors in the newcomer training program fully provide all four psychosocial functions: acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling. As Ragins and Cotton (1999) pointed out, "a given mentor may provide all or just some of these functions" (p. 530), and thus mentors in the K-Co's newcomer training program are still mentors in a theoretical sense.
[8] This is an excerpt from the essay by a professor of business, Ewha Womans University, published in *The Korea Times,* February 10, 2010.

In order to enact the prototypical "K-Co man" identity under this rigid organizational culture of perfectionism that has been continuously accumulated, confirmed, and reinforced through the long corporate history, newcomers are required to *divest* their entering self-identities fitting into the organizationally desired, espoused, and prototypical identity. A trainer said:

> At the training camp, newcomers start the training program, strongly impressed by elaborately constructed K-Co training facilities and thoroughly prepared trainers, which represent K-Co's systematic operation, exhaustive control, and super-human perfectionism. In a sense, this symbolic display of the K-Co way overwhelms trainees, conveying a strong message about how K-Co employees must think and behave. I'm sure K-Co's newcomer training program will be effective for any group of college graduates, even for those who haven't passed through K-Co's selection processes.

So, old ways of speaking, behaving, and thinking are to give way to the new ways defined in the K-Co's context. In the newcomer training program, the processes of divestiture are primed with various identity markers including uniform, language, song, logo, K-Co products, etc. The socialization tactics of remolding an individual's self-concept are expected to be especially effective, because they are executed at the point of initial entry into the organization and the subjects are the people who just graduated from university, so are in "awe" of the organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In some sense, the newcomer training program at K-Co seems similar to socialization in a "total institution" (Goffman, 1961), because it intends to exercise strong control over the trainees and sometimes promote ordeals (just like military training). However, it does not necessarily seem to "deny and strip away" personal traits of the trainees. As trainers reported, some components in the training program emphasize trainees' individual creativity, flexibility, and talents through self-participatory learning, creative problem solving, or a new product development project. In fact, the main and final format of the sessions on K-Co's history, management philosophy, and core values is a "drama" created and acted by trainees themselves based on what they have learned about K-Co from the lectures they have

heard. This indicates that K-Co's socialization tactics may contain some nature of *investiture*, but the main focus lies more on divestiture than on investiture tactics and social support for accepting individuals' incoming attributes is used only contingently to motivate change in identity (Van Maanen, 1976).

In all, K-Co's socialization tactics embedded in its newcomer training program fall into the category of *institutionalized* socialization (as opposed to individualized socialization), which intends that newcomers adopt a pre-established and organizationally espoused identity, thus reinforcing the organizational status quo. However, the components of this institutionalized socialization do not fit Jones's (1986) conceptualization: collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, but not investiture[9]. A detailed look at the characteristics of the K-Co's newcomer training program within a socialization tactics perspective reveals that this program represents a strictly structured development program that has a consistent and coherent purpose: stimulating newcomers' construction of an organizationally situated and espoused identity, named "K-Co man," by structurally displaying new identification foci and behavioral modeling reified by the socialization agents such as team and mentor. Through institutionalized and systemized organizational agency, K-Co's early newcomer socialization processes encourage divestiture

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[9] Sequential and fixed tactics do not directly apply to the case of the newcomer training program at K-Co, because the newcomer training program lasts only for the initial 4 weeks of the employees' careers, while the concepts of sequential (as opposed to random) and fixed (as opposed to variable) tactics are based on a broader spectrum of assignments and experiences throughout the long-term career stages. However, if other training programs offered by K-Co are considered as well, the socialization process at K-Co, in general, would be included in the category of sequential and fixed tactics. First, after the completion of the initial newcomer training program, each affiliate of K-Co provides a sequence of training programs designed by the specific affiliate (these programs are very similar to the newcomer training program provided at the HRD center, but more localized contexts and identities are underscored), which confirms the *sequential* nature of K-Co's socialization processes. Second, at each promotion point in one's career path, a training program that educates the new (and more strengthened) K-Co man identity fit for the new status, rank, and leadership environment in K-Co is provided at the HRD center. This indicates that precise knowledge of the timetables associated with completing each stage in the socialization is available at K-Co, thus corroborating the *fixed* feature of its socialization tactics—in fact, the newcomer training program represents the first stage in this timetable. All information on these series of training programs provided by K-Co afterwards is given to trainees during the newcomer training program.

rather than investiture of newcomers' incoming identity. The logic underlying K-Co's training

program implies that the more institutionalized the socialization tactics are, the more an

individual defines himself or herself in terms of the organization, which is, by definition,

organizational identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Pratt, 1998).

Accordingly, trainees' organizational identification may be an adequate indicator of the

newcomer training program's effectiveness that the organization pursues, thus I hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 1. Trainees' organizational identification will increase through the newcomer*
>
> *training program.*

Individual Agency: Dual Processes towards Organizational Identification

In this section, I shed light on what goes on beneath organizational socialization tactics: I

look at individual agency, and examine how individual trainees react to this highly

institutionalized socialization context. Here I report on the interview data from trainees and

previous literature that lead to a set of hypotheses on the identity change processes that

individuals experience during the newcomer training program. All interviewees reported that for

4 weeks they have been through changes in how they view K-Co, people at K-Co, and

themselves, and my analysis of these interview data revealed that the process towards

organizational identification that emerged during the training period may be conceptualized as a

twofold mechanism: (a) a cognitive process through awareness of the organization and (b) an

affective process through relationships in the organization. The former process of organizational

identification may be construed as a "direct" connection to the organization because the salience

of K-Co attributes plays a key role in this process. However, through the latter process, an

"indirect" connection to the organization occurs because the key identity cues here are the

people, and organizational identity is placed in the background of the relationship building processes among the people.

Cognitive process through awareness of the organization: Direct connection to the organization. According to trainees, their perceptions of the connection to K-Co are aroused by concrete socialization content: the knowledge about K-Co. This knowledge is basically given through lectures on K-Co's values, history, and management philosophy, and relevant team activities including K-Co themed rites and ceremonies. This learning process during the training program on the "facts" about K-Co may form a *cognitive* field from which identification with K-Co sprouts. Interviews with trainees revealed that another influential identity cue is the mentor's role modeling through his or her behaviors and attitudes. Trainees observe mentor's frequent night shifts and his or her trying to complete all of the programs as scheduled without any exceptions. They thus achieve a concrete sense of, become familiar with, and finally accept the K-Co way—how K-Co people behave and how work is done at K-Co. Put differently, through the cognitive processes of learning, the identity of K-Co and K-Co man is *directly* cued. The following quotes from three trainees show the cognitive process:

> The training program provided knowledge about K-Co. Rather than overly emphasizing K-Co specific things, it seemed to intend to gradually change or improve the image of K-Co that trainees have in their minds by taking lectures, doing Drama K-Co, or taking fun quizzes on K-Co.

> I got the lesson that "I must be on night shift" after the training program. During the training program, the mentor set an example by showing a strong sense of responsibility for his work and being always on night shift. I guess my mentor was sleeping only for two hours a day. Also, everyday we trainees were super-busy with very tight schedules and could not help doing our tasks late at night. Thus, I think trainees get to accept a heavy workload without resistance based on the established expectations of working hard.

> I was impressed by the high quality of the mentor's work. I found a huge gap between him and me. I could see how his experiences as an employee of K-Co had changed his attitude, behavior, performance, and the like. The mentor set an example by showing a

strong sense of responsibility for producing high quality work. He was trying to make no exceptions, pushing the programs forward exactly as scheduled under any situations.

Previous research also provides theoretical support for these observations. Knowledge acquisition through the socialization program reduces uncertainty and anxiety, which facilitates a newcomer's personal adjustments to the organization including his or her sense of connection with the organization (Ashforth, Sluss, & Saks, 2007; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003). Also, during the acquisition phase of socialization, interactions with a mentor are instrumental in helping newcomers learn about the organizational domain (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993): senior members can provide cultural information about the broader organization, and newly hired employees can observe them as a role model (Chatman, 1991; McManus & Russell, 1997; Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1993), gaining a concrete understanding of "who they are and who they should be in organizational terms" (Pratt, 2000, p. 471). Accordingly, by placing new knowledge and experiences within a cognitive framework (Weick, 1995), trainees incorporate values and goals of the organization into their sense of self, which is, organizational identification. I thus hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 2. Newcomers' learning during the training program will be positively associated with organizational identification.*

Notably, the interviews with trainees also revealed that the content of knowledge and information gathered throughout the training program is not necessarily K-Co-specific: organization-free general learning, which can be generally useful in any setting of organizational life, comprises a key content of knowledge learned from the newcomer training program. Trainees said the training program seems to seek to brainwash the trainees before they start work—washing out their traits as a student by emphasizing their new identity as a worker. This

"worker" identity is continuously cued by deep teamwork experience, sleep deprivation, tough schedule, and behavioral education (how to behave decently and interact with seniors and coworkers in organizational life). A trainee mentioned:

> It seems that the training program mainly aims at filtering trainees' minds, that is, changing their student mind into a worker mind through tough routines and various team-based activities emphasizing the sense of one community. Consequently, it makes people well prepared for subsequent organizational life. All of these activities in the training program provide education on behavioral norms as a social being, making trainees humble themselves, keep them in tension, be punctual, ready to cooperate with other people, behave decently, and so on. I don't think this training program necessarily fosters people fit only for K-Co. Its main purpose lies in fostering well-prepared workers, not necessarily K-Co men.

However, as long as this "general" behavioral education happens within an organizationally ingrained context, which is true of K-Co's newcomer training program, it is expected to have some effects on trainee's organizational identification. Hence, reflecting the notion of two different contents of newcomer learning—K-Co specific learning and general learning—during the newcomer training program, I divide Hypothesis 2 into two sub-hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a. Newcomers' specific learning on K-Co during the training program will be positively associated with organizational identification.

Hypothesis 2b. Newcomers' general learning on organizational life during the training program will be positively associated with organizational identification.

Affective process through relationships in the organization: Indirect connection to the organization. From the interviews with trainees, I found that another important mechanism through which trainees find their connection to K-Co is the one through specific interpersonal and group-based interactions during the training program. Colleagues (team members) and mentors are physically and emotionally proximal, and sharing similar difficulties and ordeals and

working out collective solutions with these close socialization agents induce deep human relationships and strong emotional experiences. In the process of cohesive, enjoyable, and affective relationship building, a sense of friendship/oneness is triggered and a salient identification mechanism occurs through people and the relationships with them. Although a situational and collective identity about K-Co—these people are all members of K-Co—is basically given, the notion of K-Co is relatively distal: it is located in the background of this process of close social identity formation based on strong emotional bonds between people. In other words, in the process of *affective* identification embedded in relationships, the identity of K-Co is *indirectly* cued. Trainees described:

> Overall, I enjoyed the training program quite a lot. I've built up the sense of one community through lots of interactions with my colleagues, growing very close with them. When I experience real work environments afterwards, I expect it may be very competitive and the sense of oneness might be worn out to a certain extent. But the sense of one group or one community generated from the friendship with my colleagues that I met in the training program will always be helpful for me. I guess the trainers may be trying to connect this sense of oneness into loyalty toward K-Co indirectly. When I recollect the background in which I met these people, that is K-Co... so this notion naturally increases the feeling of belongingness to K-Co. K-Co comes to have a certain meaning to me.

> Through the interactions with my mentor, I ended up with a very close relationship with him. I came to know that K-Co employees are normal human beings. The image of K-Co people, such that they are extremely and inhumanly mad about working, was corrected to a certain extent because of how human my mentor seemed during the entire training period.

The importance of relationships in the process of social identification is also posited by prior literature: the concept of "levels" of identity suggests that the relational level of identity exists in between personal identity and collective identity (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). The collective identity refers to the self defined in terms of prototypical traits shared among "depersonalized" members of a social group (Turner et al., 1987) such as an organization, whereas the relational identity means the self defined in terms of "personalized" and

75

individuated connections and role relationships with significant others such as dyadic

relationships (e.g., mentor-protégé relationship, coworker-coworker relationship) or membership

in small, face-to-face groups that are essentially networks of such dyadic relationships (Aron,

Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). Relational identities (and thereby

identification) thus contain a psychological tendency to emphasize interpersonal relatedness,

emotional intimacy, and interdependence (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The relational identities

become especially important in collectivistic Asian culture where the interdependent self-

construal is salient (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Yuki, 2003). This implies that in the K-Co's

training program relational identification with mentors and colleagues (team members) may play

a significant role as a psychological bridge that connects individuals to the organization.

Recently, Ashforth et al. (2008) also theorized that proximal identification at the relational level

would be generalized to the distal organizational level with specific identity integration

mechanisms (identity convergence and identity combining). Based on this consideration, I

hypothesize:

> *Hypothesis 3a. Identification with the mentor during the training program will be*
>
> *positively associated with organizational identification.*

> *Hypothesis 3b. Identification with team members during the training program will be*
>
> *positively associated with organizational identification.*

Figure 3-1 depicts the conceptual model of hypothesized relationships among the

variables based on the interview data.

FIGURE 3-1

The Conceptual Framework of Hypothesized Relationships
among the Variables Based on Interviews

Organizational Socialization ⟶ **Organizational Identification**
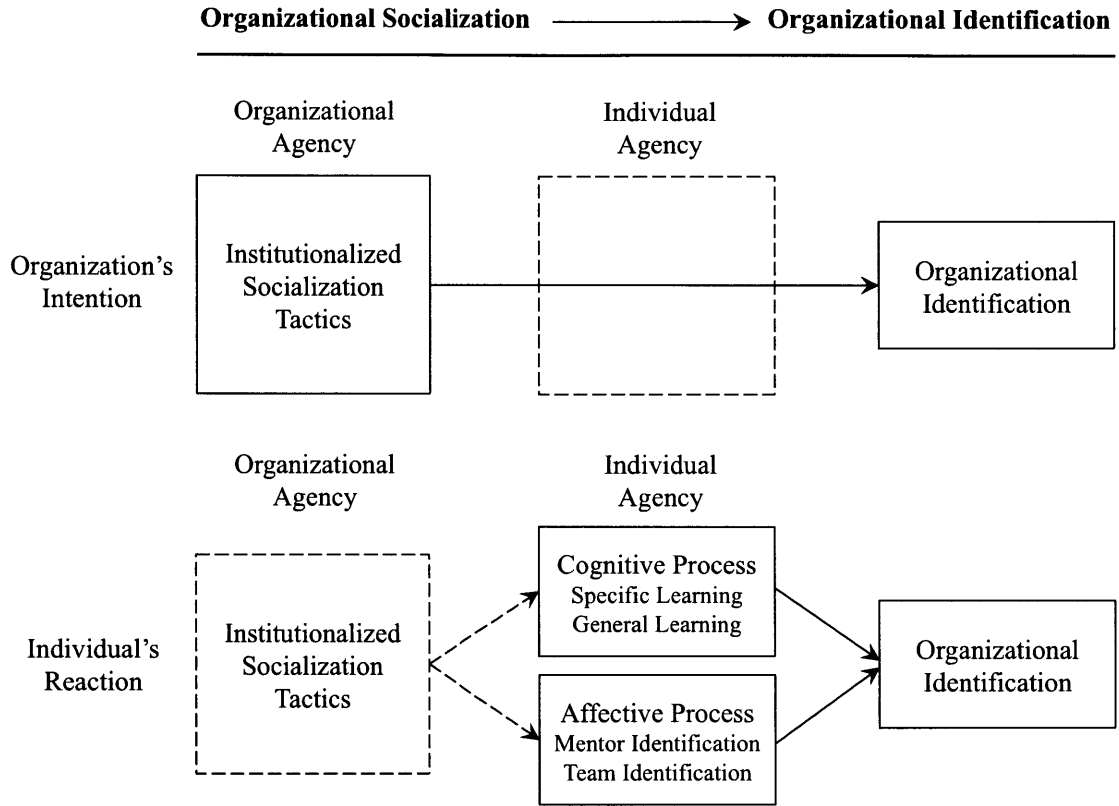
METHODS: QUANTITATIVE DATA

Sample

The data for the quantitative analysis relies on the survey administered in Korean to 100 trainees (75 men and 25 women) from 4 teams at the K-Co's newcomer training program in 2009. To identify the changes that occurred during the 4-week training period, two surveys were conducted longitudinally: on the first day of the training program the survey for Time 1 was administered to 100 trainees, and on the last day of the training program (after 4 weeks) the survey for Time 2 was given to the same 100 trainees. The response rate for the Time 1 survey was 98%, and it was 97% for Time 2. The impressively high response rate could be a sign of the willingness of trainees to comply with the organization's institutionalized socialization program or a sign of the intensity of the program itself. After listwise deletion of missing data, the final sample size for the quantitative analysis is 90 (67 men and 23 women).

Measures

Time 1 data. Time 1 data focuses on the variables regarding trainees' initial perceptions of the organization at organizational entry such as commitment propensity, pre-entry knowledge, construed external image, and pre-organizational identification (organizational identification is measured twice—on the first and the last day of the training program—so I call it here "pre" organizational identification). The time 1 data gathered at the beginning of the training program is particularly important because it rules out the possibility of self-selection bias—some individuals may have been eager for being part of K-Co that holds a prestigious and powerful image in Korea, thus already have high organizational identification at the beginning. Controlling for these "pre-training variables," I can extract the pure socialization effect on organizational identification generated by the newcomer training program.

Commitment propensity is a summary concept that integrates several of the personal characteristics and experiences that individuals bring to the organizations at entry (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982), and is measured by 8 items ($\alpha = .66$) selected from Lee, Ashford, Walsh, and Mowday (1992). A sample item is "I have a strong desire to be a K-Co employee." Respondents indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. Since commitment propensity was suggested as an integrative summary concept (Mowday et al., 1982), the items here are averaged into a composite measure of commitment propensity. *Pre-entry knowledge* indicates how much information newcomers have about their new jobs in advance, and it is measured by the mean response to 6 items ($\alpha = .75$) adapted from Breaugh and Mann (1984). An example item is "I know what the good points and bad points of the work at K-Co are." Responses are scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). *Construed external image* refers to how the organization's members believe outsiders view the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). It is measured by the mean response to 5 items ($\alpha = .67$) based on Mael and Ashforth's (1992) organizational prestige scale and modified to reflect the context around K-Co. A sample item is "People in my community think highly of K-Co." 5-point disagree/agree scale is used for this measure. *Pre-organization identification* is the mean response to 10 items ($\alpha = .90$) selected from Bartels et al. (2007). Example items are "I am very interested in what others think about K-Co." and "K-Co's successes are my successes." The 5-point Likert scale is also used.

Time 2 data. Data on trainees' perceptions of what they have experienced during the training program is collected at Time 2. It includes newcomer learning (socialization content), mentor identification, team identification, and post-organizational identification.

Newcomer learning is assessed by 11 items adapted from Morrison's (1995) two (out of seven) socialization content areas which best fit the context of the K-Co's training program: the two areas are social information and normative information. Respondents are given the following instructions: "Below is a list of information that you may have received during the newcomer training program. Indicate the extent to which you have learned in these areas." The response scale ranges from 1 (to a very little extent) to 5 (to a very large extent). I use the average of 4 items ($\alpha = .80$) for social information as a measure of *newcomers' general learning on organizational life*. Example items include "how to get along with people in the organization" and "the appropriateness of one's social behaviors." I use the average of 7 items ($\alpha = .78$) for normative information as a measure of *newcomers' specific learning on K-Co*. Example items include "the history of K-Co" and "K-Co's customs and rituals." *Mentor identification* is the mean response to 9 items ($\alpha = .90$) selected from Sluss (2006) and Vandenberghe, Bentein, and Stinglhamber (2004) (example item: "I feel a sense of respect for my mentor."), and *team identification* is the mean response to 9 items ($\alpha = .90$) adapted from Hogg and Hains (1996) (example item: "I'm glad to be a member of the team."). Respondents indicate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement of these two identification measures. Finally, *post-organizational identification* is measured in the same way as pre-organizational identification ($\alpha = .94$).

Controls. In the survey, demographic variables that may affect the process of organizational identification such as gender, age, and family income are also included as controls. Gender (*Male*) is coded 1 for men and 0 for women. *Age* is coded in years and ranged from 22 to 30. *Family income* is the total monthly income of one's family members and measured using a scale from 1 to 9 in increments of 1 million (1 million Korean won is

approximately equivalent to $900), where 1 = less than 2 million, 2 = 2 million ~ 3 million, 3 = 3 million ~ 4 million, and so on with the last category being 9 = 9 million or greater.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND TESTING HYPOTHESES

Correlation Analysis

Table 3-1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables in the model. As predicted, post-organizational identification is positively correlated with the training-related variables (mentor identification, team identification, and two newcomer learning variables). Also, the means of mentor identification (4.58) and team identification (4.49) are higher than that of post-organizational identification (4.36), and the t-tests show that the mean difference between mentor and post-organizational identifications is significant at the .001 level and that the mean difference between team and post-organizational identifications is significant at the .01 level. This finding confirms Riketta and van Dick's (2005) notion that lower foci of identification tend to be more salient and stronger than higher foci of identification.

TABLE 3-1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Post-organizational identification	4.36	.57											
2. Mentor identification	4.58	.42	.59***										
3. Team identification	4.49	.44	.43***	.54***									
4. Newcomer learning on org life	3.85	.54	.36***	.30**	.41***								
5. Newcomer learning on K-Co	4.15	.47	.44***	.38***	.25*	.51***							
6. Pre-organizational identification	4.15	.62	.56***	.20†	.17†	.24*	.16						
7. Commitment propensity	3.87	.50	.21*	.08	−.00	.12	.11	.54***					
8. Pre-entry knowledge	3.59	.55	.24*	.19†	.02	.21*	.18†	.19†	.18†				
9. Construed external image	4.04	.49	.24*	.19	.07	.19†	.29**	.51***	.42***	.37***			
10. Male	.73	.44	.10	.08	−.01	.02	.15	.06	.14	.06	.02		
11. Age	25.73	1.64	−.07	−.02	−.19†	−.09	.00	.05	.08	−.02	−.00	.67***	
12. Family income	4.12	2.43	.00	−.02	−.05	−.08	.02	.13	.33**	.04	.14	−.15	.05

$n = 90$.
†p < .10   *p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

The correlations between post-organizational identification and organizational entry variables (commitment propensity, pre-entry knowledge, and construed external image) are also positive, but these correlations (significant at .05 level) are not as significant as the correlations between post-organizational identification and the training-related variables (all significant at .001 level). This finding implies that post-organizational identification is more related to concrete training experiences rather than to the abstract state of mind at organizational entry. The correlations between control variables (gender, age, and family income) and all other variables are mostly insignificant, which indicates that demographic characteristics do not explain much about the newcomer training program at K-Co.

Interestingly, post-organizational identification and pre-organizational identification are highly correlated, but the mean has been increased from 4.15 to 4.36, and the t-test shows that this mean increase is statistically significant (the t-statistic is 3.26, significant at the .001 level). Thus, Hypothesis 1 predicting that trainees' organizational identification will increase through the newcomer training program is supported. Then, the next step should be identifying which variables during the training program contribute to trainees' post-organizational identification.

Regression Analysis: Processes towards Organizational Identification

Table 3-2 presents the results of the OLS regression analysis on organizational identification in the context of the K-Co's newcomer training program. In every model, the dependent variable is post-organizational identification.

TABLE 3-2

Regression Analyses on Post-Organizational Identification

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Male	.33*	(.16)	.21	(.15)	.25†	(.14)	.16	(.13)
Age	− .09*	(.04)	− .07†	(.04)	− .07*	(.04)	− .06	(.04)
Family income	.01	(.02)	.00	(.02)	.01	(.02)	.01	(.02)
Commitment propensity	− .17	(.13)	− .16	(.12)	− .14	(.11)	− .13	(.11)
Pre-entry knowledge	.16†	(.10)	.14	(.09)	.11	(.08)	.12	(.08)
Construed external image	− .11	(.12)	− .23†	(.12)	− .08	(.11)	− .18	(.11)
Pre-organizational identification	.60***	(.10)	.59***	(.09)	.49***	(.09)	.52***	(.08)
Newcomer learning on organizational life			.06	(.09)			− .06	(.09)
Newcomer learning on K-Co			.39**	(.10)			.28**	(.09)
Mentor identification					.51***	(.13)	.41**	(.13)
Team identification					.14	(.13)	.15	(.13)
Team 2			− .01	(.14)	− .11	(.12)	− .04	(.13)
Team 3			− .10	(.13)	− .11	(.11)	− .08	(.12)
Team 4			.07	(.13)	.02	(.12)	.07	(.12)
Adjusted R^2	.35		.46		.53		.57	

$n = 90$. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.
†$p < .10$ *$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

In Model 1, I only include the organizational entry variables. Except for pre-organizational identification, these variables measured at Time 1 are insignificantly related to post-organizational identification, indicating that individual differences at entry do not matter much in predicting post-organizational identification.

The regression analysis on the cognitive process is shown in Model 2 in Table 3-2. In this model, I add two newcomer learning variables and three team dummy variables to control for the team fixed effects (team 1 is the reference category). When predicting post-organizational identification, newcomers' specific learning on K-Co is significant at the .01 level, explaining a significant amount of variance, supporting Hypothesis 2a that postulates a positive relationship between newcomers' specific learning on K-Co and post-organizational identification. Newcomers' general learning on organizational life during the training program is positively related to post-organizational identification, but not significantly, thus Hypothesis 2b that posits a positive relationship between newcomers' general learning on organizational life and post-organizational identification is not supported.

As for the affective process, the results of the regression analysis provide some support (see Model 3 in Table 3-2). When predicting post-organizational identification, mentor identification is significant at the .001 level, supporting Hypothesis 3a that predicts identification with the mentor will be positively associated with post-organizational identification. However, Hypothesis 3b expecting a positive relationship between trainees' identification with team members and post-organizational identification is not supported since team identification is not significant in the regression analysis.

Model 4 in Table 3-2 presents the regression model that includes all independent variables. In this regression analysis, two variables are still significant in predicting post-

organizational identification: (a) newcomer learning on K-Co (at the .01 level) and (b) mentor

identification (at the .01 level). This finding indicates that, though not every independent

variable is statistically significant, both cognitive process (through newcomer learning on K-Co)

and affective process (through mentor identification) are identified as meaningful mechanisms in

the process of fostering organizational identification[10].

Regression Analysis: Relationships among the Processes Variables

In order to scrutinize the roles of mentor identification and team identification in the

process of organizational identification, I did additional regression analyses, and the results are

presented in Table 3-3.

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[10] As shown in Table 3-1, a significant number of individuals began the training program with a high score of pre-organizational identification—the mean of pre-organizational identification is 4.15. However, my survey instrument did not differentiate finely among the people having high pre-organizational identification score. This led to a right censoring of the outcome variable (post-organizational identification): the room for their organizational identification being increased through the training program is too little or zero (if their pre-organizational identification score is 5). This leads to the concern that the residuals for individuals with high post-organizational identification are not normally distributed, violating a basic assumption of OLS. To test the robustness of my findings to this violation, I performed quantile regression with my data. Quantile regression does not require the assumption of the normal distribution of the residuals for the entire range of the outcome variable. This model examines the effect of covariates on the conditional quantile of rather than the conditional mean of post-organizational identification. The findings from quantile regression remain substantively the same as the OLS results: mentor identification and newcomers' specific learning on K-Co are positively and significantly related to post-organizational identification, while team identification and newcomers' general learning on organizational life remain insignificant.

TABLE 3-3

Regression Analyses among Processes Variables

Variables	Newcomer Learning on K-Co		Newcomer Learning on Organizational Life	
Male	.30†	(.16)	− .04	(.17)
Age	− .05	(.04)	− .02	(.05)
Family income	.01	(.02)	− .02	(.02)
Commitment propensity	− .04	(.13)	.07	(.14)
Pre-entry knowledge	− .05	(.10)	.19†	(.10)
Construed external image	.33**	(.12)	− .11	(.14)
Pre-organizational identification	− .09	(.10)	.05	(.11)
Newcomer learning on organizational life	.23*	(.11)		
Newcomer learning on K-Co			.25*	(.12)
Mentor identification	.32**	(.15)	− .03	(.16)
Team identification	− .05	(.16)	.51**	(.16)
Team 2	− .24	(.15)	− .32†	(.16)
Team 3	− .11	(.14)	− .20	(.15)
Team 4	− .15	(.15)	− .23	(.15)
Adjusted R^2	.22		.24	

$n = 90$. Standard errors are reported in parentheses.

†p < .10   *p < .05   **p < .01   ***p < .001

The notable finding is that mentor identification is significantly related to newcomer specific learning on K-Co, not to general learning on organizational life, whereas team identification is just the opposite: being significantly related to general learning, not to specific learning on K-Co. As for the former finding, it seems that the mentor, as a role model, is associated with the K-Co way and K-Co man, so that identification with the mentor enhances concrete learning on K-Co, not so much on organizational life in general. This finding corresponds to what a trainer said in the interview:

> The significant part of this training program is that it is run by mentors. Mentors stay in the training camp with trainees during the whole training period, so that they can share almost everything with their trainees, and consequently a very close mentor-trainee relationship emerges. Trainees have opportunities to learn not only from the training program itself but also from their mentor personally. The deep interaction and close relationship between mentors and trainees make it possible for trainees to smoothly internalize the core values of K-Co and get a sense of the organizationally desired identity, resulting in their becoming K-Co men.

In contrast, identification with team members (colleagues) may provide opportunities to learn how to behave appropriately in an organizational setting in general, but the organization is not necessarily K-Co. This means that, in this socialization process, the salient focus of identification remains at the relational level (relational identification with team members), not reaching the organizational level, and it is further facilitated by the "general"—thus not specific-organization-involved—nature of this behavioral learning. To be sure, newcomers' general learning on organizational life is implemented in a specific organizational setting, which is K-Co. However, in this type of learning process, in Goffman's (1959) terms, K-Co just provides a theater for this relational identification drama among trainees and stays as audience at a distance. In other words, in the process of relational identification with colleagues, the color of K-Co's identity is just faint. Team identification is constructed somewhat independently of the specific organizational context of K-Co: in the localized team context, trainees construct their collective

identity as a team and learn about desirable behaviors useful for any organizational setting, and the collective identity as a specific organizational member (K-Co man) is not necessarily triggered.

DISCUSSION

In order to unwrap the interplay between individuals and organization, this chapter drew on and bridged two bodies of identity research—organizational socialization and organizational identification—and explored multi-level accounts of the *process* of organizational identification. As the empirical evidence for its theoretical argument, this chapter used the 4-week newcomer training program at K-Co. I used both qualitative data (interviews with trainers and trainees) and quantitative data (surveys from trainees) in addressing the research question.

Organizational Agency

The organization's intention underlying its newcomer training program was embodied through the interviews with trainers, the agents of the organization. These interviews revealed that K-Co's training program is embedded in an institutionalized socialization context. The six socialization tactics found in K-Co's context—collective, formal, sequential, fixed, serial, and divestiture—are conceptually coherent: they support a strong organizational agency that purports to imprint on newcomers an organizationally espoused identity, named K-Co man, which has been constructed through this organization's long history. Put differently, by making this K-Co man identity salient using the socialization agents such as mentor and team in the socialization processes, the organization exercises its influence on individual trainees' identity work, stimulating their organizational identification.

This study extends the extant organizational socialization literature by digging into what goes on *beneath* the institutionalized socialization tactics taken by the organization: it identifies how individuals actively do their identity work in reaction to the organization's actions. Here, individuals are not passive recipients of the organization's influence as often construed in the previous organizational socialization literature.

Individual Agency

Individual's reaction to this organizational agency was initially identified through the interviews with trainees. At the K-Co's newcomer training program, as this organization expected, trainees increased their organizational identification, and it has been achieved through a twofold mechanism: (a) a cognitive (and direct) process through awareness of the organization and (b) an affective (and indirect) process through relationships in the organization. However, these processes of organizational identification during the early socialization program, hypothesized from the interview data, were only partly confirmed by the subsequent quantitative analysis based on pre- and post-training survey responses. Specifically, on the cognitive process, trainees' specific learning on K-Co, but not general learning on organizational life, was significantly connected to their organizational identification at the end of the training program, and on the affective process, trainees' identification with their mentor, but not with team members, was significantly associated with their organizational identification. These results capture the dynamic interplay between organization and individuals on the process towards organizational identification: for some socialization agents provided by the organization, the organization's intention works, while for others, it does not work, because of active individual agency. Below, I interpret these empirical results by re-conceptualizing the mechanism of

organizational identification through organizational socialization, as composed of (a) an organization-specific process and (b) an organization-free process.

Organization-specific process through mentor identification and specific learning. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed that mentor identification, associated with newcomers' K-Co specific learning, is a significant socializing mechanism that leads to trainees' organizational identification. This finding has theoretical implication regarding the integrating mechanisms of cross-level identification foci within an organization: identification with a mentor, a salient lower identity focus, is a significant road for generating identification with the organization, a higher identity focus. In the institutionalized socialization program, the mentor is always proximal to trainees and plays the role of an exemplary member of K-Co, thus confirming what trainees learn specifically about K-Co and K-Co man identity throughout the training period. Accordingly, through the concrete lens of relational identification with the mentor, a K-Co specific socialization agent provided by the organization, trainees can view the distal and amorphous organizational attributes (e.g., K-Co's norms, values, and management philosophy), in a positive manner. The mentor thus functions as a bridge in the interplay between individuals and organization: trainees' relational identification with this socialization agent, combined with K-Co specific learning, converges into their identification with the organization both cognitively and affectively. The results of this study provide empirical evidence of the recent theoretical works by Ashforth and his colleagues (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2008; Sluss & Ashforth, 2008): they proposed a model of identity convergence processes, which is that identification with one focus—mentor—generalizes to identification with another focus—organization—through social influence, anthropomorphization, personalization, affective transfer, and behavioral sensemaking.

Organization-free process through team identification and general learning. In the

regression analysis, team identification was not significantly associated with trainees'

organizational identification. This finding implies that even in an institutionalized socialization

context where organizational agency strongly acts in order to imprint an organizationally

espoused identity, trainees' identification with their team members, another lower identity focus

other than the mentor, does *not necessarily* converge to organizational identification, a higher

identity focus. This may imply that team identification is a more active actualization of

individual agency, constructed independent of organizational agency.

The localized team level context is perceived by trainees as more proximal and personal

than the organizational level (Lawler, 1992; Moreland & Levine, 2001; Riketta & van Dick,

2005), and various inter-team competitions, although they are done in "K-Co's" training

program, enhances the salience of team identity. As the subsequent regression analysis (among

the intervening variables) revealed, the meaning of team activities/learning and relationships

with colleagues is not organization-specific, but ingrained in an organization-free context. At the

team level, socialization and identification with other members contain the primary meaning of

becoming a social being in general (identity change from a student to a worker), and the meaning

of becoming a specific organizational being (K-Co man) is relatively weak. Look at the

following quote from a trainee:

> Through the process of cooperation and sharing with team members, I learned about how
> to behave properly and decently in organizational life. The trainers kept emphasizing that
> the trainees are not students anymore! But it was not necessarily about proper behavior
> and manners for the K-Co man. It can be applied to any other organizational settings.

Also, the equal relationships among team members (not yet K-Co men), which are

different from the top-down relationship with the mentor (already an exemplary K-Co man), do

not necessarily reflect the K-Co color: the relational nature of team identification lies primarily

in encouragement and mutual psychological support that colleagues, as "friends," provide in

stressful training situations. Although K-Co is a critical audience—trainees, eventually, need to

win K-Co's applause to complete the newcomer training program—in this team identification

drama during the training program, consistently watching and evaluating trainees' team

activities, and tacitly telling trainees what it desires and expects from its employees, the identity

of K-Co is not salient here: it is only implicitly presented as a provider of the theater in which

trainees enact their team identity episodes as workers in general, not necessarily as K-Co men.

The following quote from a trainee supports this interpretation:

> The most memorable part of the training is that I created great friendships. People get
> closer and closer by going through these hardships together. The harder the processes
> are, the closer the relationships get. The sense of one group or one community is
> generated from the training program. I guess the color of K-Co might be subconsciously
> embedded throughout the process of building this perception of oneness among the team
> members.

To sum up, even in the institutionalized socialization at the K-Co's newcomer training

program that seeks trainees' organizational identification, individuals' reaction to this

organization's intention is not always realized as the organization expects: trainees'

identification with each socialization agent functions in a different way on the process towards

organizational identification. While mentor identification, associated with organization-specific

learning on K-Co, converges into organizational identification, team identification, associated

with organization-free general learning, does not necessarily converge into organizational

identification. In other words, in terms of boosting organizational identification through

organizational socialization, the mentor is a significant socialization agent, but the team is not.

Figure 3-2 demonstrates the conclusive conceptual model of this study.

FIGURE 3-2
A Model of Organization Identification through Organizational Socialization

Organizational Socialization ——————————————→ Organizational Identification

Organizational
Agency

Individual
Agency

Institutionalized Socialization Tactics

Organization-Specific Process
Mentor Identification
Specific Learning

Organization-Free Process
Team Identification
General Learning

Organizational Identification
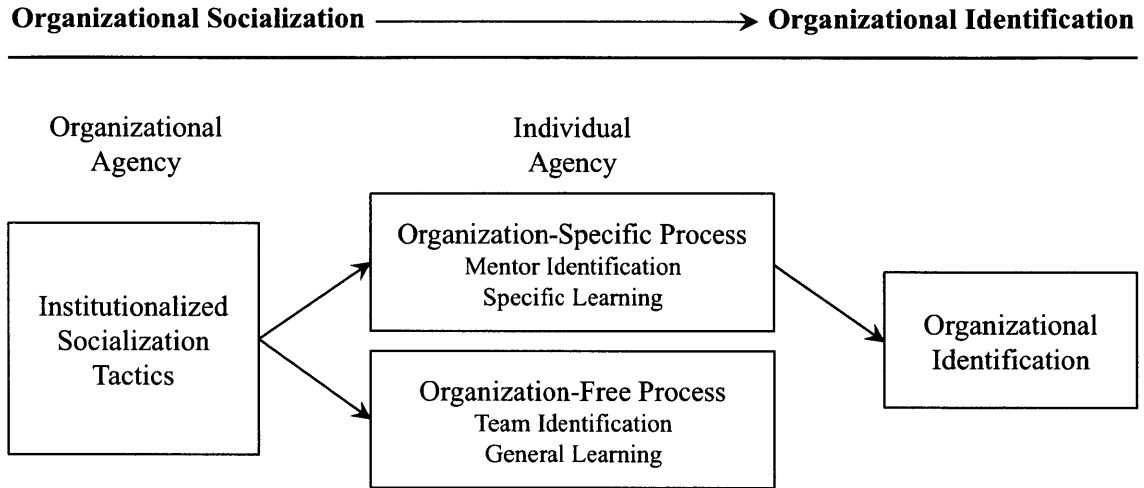
CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I unveiled K-Co's newcomer training program as igniting organizational identification. Data analysis revealed that in terms of achieving the basic goal of the training program—boosting trainees' organizational identification—K-Co's training program works effectively, but in terms of process—*how* this increased organizational identification is attained—K-Co's newcomer training program at K-Co is not necessarily effective. Based on this empirical evidence, I suggest a model of organizational identification through organizational socialization that unravels how an organization and individuals interplay in the process of organizational identification. In this multi-level model, even in the setting of institutionalized socialization, the organization's intention underlying the process of attaining individuals' organizational identification is only partially realized, because individuals do not always react to socialization agents as the organization expected. Through this model, I bridge two bodies of literature on identity work in the organization—organizational socialization and organizational identification—and thus provide a more comprehensive theoretical and empirical picture of the *process* towards organizational identification.

CHAPTER 4

K-Co Man at the Workplace:

Identifying the Core-Periphery Map of

Organizational Identification with an

Occupational Perspective

This chapter delves into what happens regarding K-Co employees' identity work after the second stage of employees' identity dynamics, the 4-week newcomer training program. In Chapter 3, I found that trainees' organizational identification has significantly increased through this training program, but how long, strongly, or validly this psychological state attained by the training will be kept throughout the real work experiences is another issue. In this chapter, thus, I move to the third stage of employees' identity dynamics, shedding light on how organizational identification varies among current K-Co employees working at the real workplaces of K-Co.

As discussed in Chapter 1, organizational identification is defined to occur when one's personal identity contains the same attributes as those in the identity of the organization one belongs to (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Pratt, 1998). This alignment process between individual identity and organizational identity is more likely to occur when the organizational identity is distinctive (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). It implies that employees' organizational identification may become more salient when the organization, just like K-Co, has a strong organizational culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; O'Reilly, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991) that promotes employees' strong attachment towards their organization with a clear notion of espoused organizational values and norms.

In the field of organizational behavior, the vast majority of research on identity has tended to investigate an individual's identification with the organization "as a whole" (Bartels et al., 2007; Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006). When it comes to a strong organizational culture, this notion of "one" organization becomes consolidated, because a strong culture imposes agreement about basic assumptions and values in the organization and in turn behavioral consistency across organizational members (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; O'Reilly, 1989). Thus, with a clearly reified identity of the organization, the organizational members in a

strong culture are expected to identify with "the" organization. However, as long as

organizational identification happens through the interplay between two agents, individual and

organization (Ashforth et al., 2008), room for individual agency may still exist even within a

strong organizational context. Especially, when the size of an organization is large and thus

there are some niches wherein sub-groups—and thus subcultures—within the organization may

emerge (Boisnier & Chatman, 2003; Trice & Beyer, 1993), the identity dynamics between

individual and organization may not be necessarily dominated by the strong organizational

identity in those niches.

Some identity researchers (e.g., Bartels et al., 2007; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000;

Riketta & van Dick, 2005) have already raised the question regarding the implicit assumption of

the "organization as a whole" by investigating the varying patterns of member identification

within an organization. Their framework has been constructed in a *vertical* way that focuses on

making differentiations among multiple levels of identification foci nested within

organizations—identification with relationship, workgroup, team, unit, and finally organization

(for a more detailed literature review on multiple foci of identification, see Chapter 3). However,

this vertical elaboration does not capture the whole picture of the variation of organizational

identification, as long as it does not incorporate a *horizontal* lens. According to the vertical

framework, individuals, in general, tend to identify more strongly with lower order identities

(e.g., workgroup, team) than higher order identities (e.g., organization) (Ashforth et al., 2008;

Riketta & van Dick, 2005), but whether or not this differentiating mechanism of individuals'

identity work would hold *across* different sub-groups (e.g., functional divisions or departments)

within an organization has rarely been examined. Particularly, in a strong organizational culture,

where the identity of an organization is expected to be ubiquitously penetrative despite vertical

layers of multiple identification foci, does the variation of employees' organizational

identification still exist? I expect the horizontal lens will give an answer to this research

question. This chapter thus seeks to identify how employees' identity work in relation to their

organization varies across sub-groups even within the context of a strong organizational culture.

To address the issue of the horizontal variation of employees' organizational

identification, I employ the concept of occupation. Although one's occupation is a critical

element that affects one's work identity in organizational life (Pratt et al., 2006; Russo, 1998;

Van Maanen & Barley, 1984), thus serving as a major identity cue for situating individuals in the

organization, the notion of occupation too often has been overlooked in the organizational

identification literature (Ashforth et al., 2008). This under-emphasis on occupations reflects the

disciplinary stream in the organizational identification literature largely dominated by

organizational psychologists. Under the influence of social identity theory and self-

categorization theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987), organizational psychologists

have focused on collectives—*where* one belongs—in discussing identity and identification. In

contrast, organizational sociologists, related to identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker &

Serpe, 1982), have elucidated the issues of identity and identification with the primary focus on

roles—*what* one does—such as occupations (Barley, 1989, 1996; Trice, 1993). In everyday

work life, however, where I work and what I do are simultaneously important (Van Maanen &

Barley, 1984), and thus without considering occupation, a critical source of identification at

work, discussion of employees' identity work is incomplete.

Accordingly, this chapter actively applies the occupational lens in unraveling employees'

identity work in the organization. For empirical evidence, I look into the three main sub-groups

within K-Co—three functional departments (HR, Engineering, and Marketing departments)—

that hold conspicuously differential occupational attributes. The analysis of interview data with K-Co employees shows the identity of the occupation that individuals in each department hold significantly moderates K-Co employees' identity alignment process between individual and organization. It also reveals a notable power distribution among the three groups that originates from each group's occupational identity formed under K-Co's strong organizational culture—HR in the core, Marketing in the middle, and Engineering in the periphery—which affects each occupation incumbents' identification with K-Co. Based on these findings, I draw a comprehensive core-periphery map of organizational identification that conceptualizes how employees' organizational identification varies horizontally, that is, occupationally. I also elaborate this map by considering one's organizational tenure that causes additional variation of employees' identification with the organization.

THEORY AND LITERATURE

Organization and Occupation

Various theoretical approaches in social sciences have been taken to examine the relations between organizations and occupations in understanding work and workers. At the macro level, in the field of sociology of work, occupation has been a key word in understanding how work is organized and structured in organizations (Abbott, 1993; Barley, 1996; Barley & Kunda, 2001; Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). From this perspective, occupations are contrasted to organizational processes of organizing work—the structural conflict between occupational and administrative principles of organizing (Freidson, 1973). Occupations (mostly professional) and organizations (mostly bureaucratic) have been traditionally depicted as in tension because in organizations work is configured and allocated by the structure of hierarchical

100

commands, weakening workers' occupational identities enacted through their specific knowledge and control. Barley and Tolbert (1991) classified the dynamics between occupation and organization as "bureaucratization of occupations" and "occupationalization of organizations." The former indicates the process of how specialized tasks are incorporated into the formalized division of labor bound in an organizational context, whereas the latter focuses on the process of how an occupational group gains their authority within or across organizations when organizing and carrying out their work. In the past, occupational sociologists have described these dynamics as organization-dominant embodied by the rigid bureaucratic organizational structure (Blau, 1955; Leicht & Fennell, 1997). However, with the recent trends of a dramatic shift in organizational structure and control into post-bureaucratic flexibility, which is driven by the increasing percentage of the workforce engaged in professional or technical work, they emphasize the increasing importance of occupations in unpacking the nature of work organizing (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Kalleberg, 2003; Smith, 1997; Tolbert, 1996).

At the micro level, under the varying nature of work affected by the organizing drive of occupations and organizations, how individuals make a psychological connection to their occupations or organizations has been investigated. As in the research at the macro level, traditionally, an individual's attachment to an organization and attachment to an occupation were described as in conflict or as zero-sum—an increase in attachment to the value system in one area is accompanied by a decrease in attachment to the value system in the other (Gouldner, 1958; Hall, 1968; Kalleberg & Berg, 1987; Lachman & Aranya, 1986; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974). Later empirical work, however, has identified that these two could be positively correlated (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). This positive relationship is moderated by an occupation's value or worth to an organization's survival (Bartol, 1979;

Lachman & Aranya, 1986)—when an occupation is considered to bear significant competence that leads to high organizational performance, the organization allows for the realization of occupational work values and expectations, which results in that occupation incumbent's simultaneous attachment to both value systems from occupation and organization.

Previous studies on individuals' attachment/commitment to occupation and to organization have largely centered on professionals whose occupations are clearly defined based on specialized education, skills, and knowledge (e.g., physicians (Hekman, Bigley, Steensma, & Hereford, 2009), accountants (Lachman & Aranya, 1986), engineers (Baugh & Roberts, 1994), and lawyers (Wallace, 1995)). However, on the continuum of professionalization (Hickson & Thomas, 1969), there are occupations less professional, and how an individual's value system varies between occupation and organization among the individuals holding less or non-professional occupations is less known (Kim & Mueller, 2011). This chapter thus takes a cross-occupational comparison within an organization—HR staff, engineers, and marketers at K-Co—to identify how various types of occupation holders make sense of their occupation and organization at work. I question the implicit assumption in the previous literature that occupation and organization take separate domains in an individual's value system and identity work. Depending on the nature of work, the two domains may not be necessarily separate, thus workers' identification with occupation and with organization may occur concurrently.

Subculture and Strong Culture

The relations between occupation and organization have also been discussed within the lens of organizational culture. Especially, the literature on subculture (e.g., Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Boisnier & Chatman, 2003; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Trice, 1993; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Van Maanen & Barley, 1985) provides a hint on how an occupation plays a role in shaping the

102

identities of the individuals with that occupation who work for an organization. Subcultures "subscribe to clusters of understanding, behaviors, and cultural forms that characterize them as distinctive groups within an organization" (Trice, 1993, p. 141), and occupational groups composed of individuals with similar personal, educational, and work experiences are the most likely to form subcultures within an organization, namely occupational subcultures (Trice, 1993; Trice & Beyer, 1993).

The relation between a subculture and the overarching organizational culture has been conceptualized using a typology including enhancing subcultures, orthogonal subcultures, and countercultures (Martin & Siehl, 1983). Members belonging to enhancing subcultures more fervently adhere to the core values of the overarching organizational culture than do the members in any other subculture. However, counterculture members stick to their own particular value systems in conflict with the core values coming from the dominant organizational culture, thus forming peripheral sub-cultural enclaves. Members of orthogonal subcultures are located in-between, holding the core values of the dominant organizational culture as well as their own set of values emerging from their occupational groups. The existence of various types of occupational subcultures within an organization indicates that how much occupation and organization overlap in one's value system may depend on the nature of the occupation one holds. Also, since values are tied to one's identity work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991), how one defines oneself at work in terms of organization or occupation may rely on the nature of one's occupation in relation to the organization.

In a strong organizational culture, where a widely shared and intensely held system of espoused values and behavioral norms defines appropriate attitudes and behaviors for all organizational members, and thus organizational members are expected to agree with and

internalize those values (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; O'Reilly, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991; Saffold, 1988), how do subcultures emerge and affect members' perceptions of value systems and identity work? The concept of strong culture recalls Martin's (1992) typology of "integrated" culture, where the social or normative glue that holds together a potentially diverse group of organizational members with a common language, shared values, or an agreed-upon set of desired behaviors. This type of culture naturally contrasts to a "differentiated" culture that allows for sources of diversity often creating nested-subcultures (Martin, 1992; Meyerson & Martin, 1987). However, as Boisnier and Chatman (2003) argued in their theory paper, even within a strong cultural context, subcultures are likely to emerge when an organization has great task differentiation, various functional divisions, and distinct occupational groups.

Based on these theoretical considerations, this chapter empirically examines how individuals in different occupational groups within a large organization having a strong organizational culture make sense of the context—both organizational and occupational—where they are situated and its effect on their identity work. Most previous views on organizational culture have centered on group-level phenomena—how certain cultural forms are constructed, expressed, maintained, or changed—and less emphasis was given to individual-level realms. However, Van Maanen and Barley (1985) pointed out that "while a group is necessary to invent and sustain culture, culture can be carried only by individuals" (p. 35), and this implies that collective meanings given to certain cultural values still leave individual room for interpretation and sensemaking. With only few exceptions (e.g., Kunda, 1992; Pratt, 2000; Van Maanen, 1991), individuals' reactions, not the organization's actions, have rarely been examined in a strong cultural context. This chapter thus delves into how individuals, as active agents (Golden, 1992; Harris, 1994), manifest and interpret organizational culture and make sense of their self-

concepts situated in a strong cultural setting. Actively applying the occupational lens, I analyze how individual agency is reified in individuals' identity work in relation to the organization based upon their sub-cultural value system ingrained in their occupational group. Put differently, this study purports to identify the occupational—horizontal—spectrum of employees' organizational identification in the context of the K-Co's strong organizational culture.

METHODS

Data

Interviews. In order to identify the variation of organizational identification in a strong cultural context, I took an inductive approach using interview data from 49 current K-Co employees. I used the methods of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As the aim of this study was to better understand unexplored dynamics regarding employees' identity work and thus elaborate theory on organizational identification, I designed it as open-ended, allowing new themes to emerge through the processes of data collection and analysis. I started with an initial, somewhat broad, interest in the identity issues in a strong culture—what is going on with the identity of "K-Co man"? My specific interest in the role of occupations in employees' identity work was not salient at the beginning of data collection. Initially, I started interviews with broad questions such as "Please describe your current thinking and feeling towards K-Co" and "How do you feel about yourself as a K-Co employee?" in order to elicit rich details and multiple viewpoints on work identity at K-Co. As each interview progressed, themes around occupations began to emerge across interviews, so I validated these themes in the next round of interviews (Locke, 2001; Spradley, 1979), asking additional questions such as "How do you feel about yourself as an engineer?"

105

Interviews were conducted in Korean and typically lasted 90 minutes, ranging from 30 minutes to over 180 minutes. Most of the interviews (90%: 44 out of 49 interviews) were recorded and transcribed verbatim. When the interviewees did not allow me to record the interview because of privacy issues, I tried to transcribe as much as possible during the interview and created the log on the interview as soon after the interview as possible. Interview transcripts averaged 12.5 single-spaced pages and totaled 610 pages.

Sample. I began data collection with preliminary interviews conducted with the three K-Co employees working at the HR department to get a basic sense of the "K-Co man" identity. I asked them the desired and espoused employee personalities at K-Co, basic characteristics of K-Co culture, meaning of the K-Co man identity, how the K-Co man identity is reflected in K-Co culture, etc. In the process of probing in these interviews, the notion of "variation" first emerged. The interviewees mentioned that although it is true that K-Co has a strong organizational identity compared to other companies, as long as K-Co is such a large company, there might be some variations across departments in employees' perceptions of the K-Co man identity. Based both on their subjective experiences of observing some salient differences in personalities and identity work as a K-Co employee and on objective differences in some HR policies between engineers and non-engineers, these informants suggested that I select the sample for subsequent interviews based on this distinction.

Reflecting on this suggestion, I recruited interviewees with the notion of employees at the R&D department vs. employees at the non-R&D department. These interviews led me to the initial idea that even within a strong cultural context, for engineers, the fact that they work as a K-Co employee is not as important and salient as for employees at the non-R&D department. However, as interview data collection proceeded, another type of variation in employees'

identity work as a K-Co man emerged, which is the variation within the non-R&D people—

between employees at the HR department and employees at the marketing department.

Accordingly, I decided to deal with 3 categories, not 2 categories. The final sample for data

analysis is composed of 16 HR staff members, 10 marketers, and 23 engineers.

Demographically, 17% of the interviewees were women (38% of HR staff and 20% of marketers

were women, but all interviewees from the engineering department were men), and their tenure

with K-Co ranged from 1 year to 25 years with an average of 10 years (HR staff's average tenure

was 12 years, engineers' was 9 year, and marketers' was 8 years).

Analysis

The qualitative data analysis followed the three steps described below.

First, transcripts of the interviews were analyzed using open coding procedures to

develop conceptual labels[11] that reflect informants' view of experiences at work (Locke, 2001).

In this stage, I read each transcript word-for-word and coded anything I thought related to

organizational culture/identity and interviewees' reactions and adjustments to the organization

and organizational life. All this coding was done using ATLAS.ti software.

The second stage of analysis involved moving to axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

to refine and develop theoretical categories. Throughout the first stage of open coding, I got the

sense that, in understanding employees' perceptions of their self-identity in relation to the

organization, "what one does" or "occupation" was a salient theme. Therefore, I created code

families based on the codes that are conceptually connected around occupation, and through this

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[11] Although interview transcripts were all in Korean, when I was coding, I got the labels mostly in English. It was because my overall knowledge on the issues regarding identity and identification came from my reading of the articles published in English. However, for some codes, as I could not find the equivalent words in English, I gave them Korean labels. I intentionally avoided translating the interview transcripts into English lest I should lose subtle underlying meanings that can be captured only in the original language.
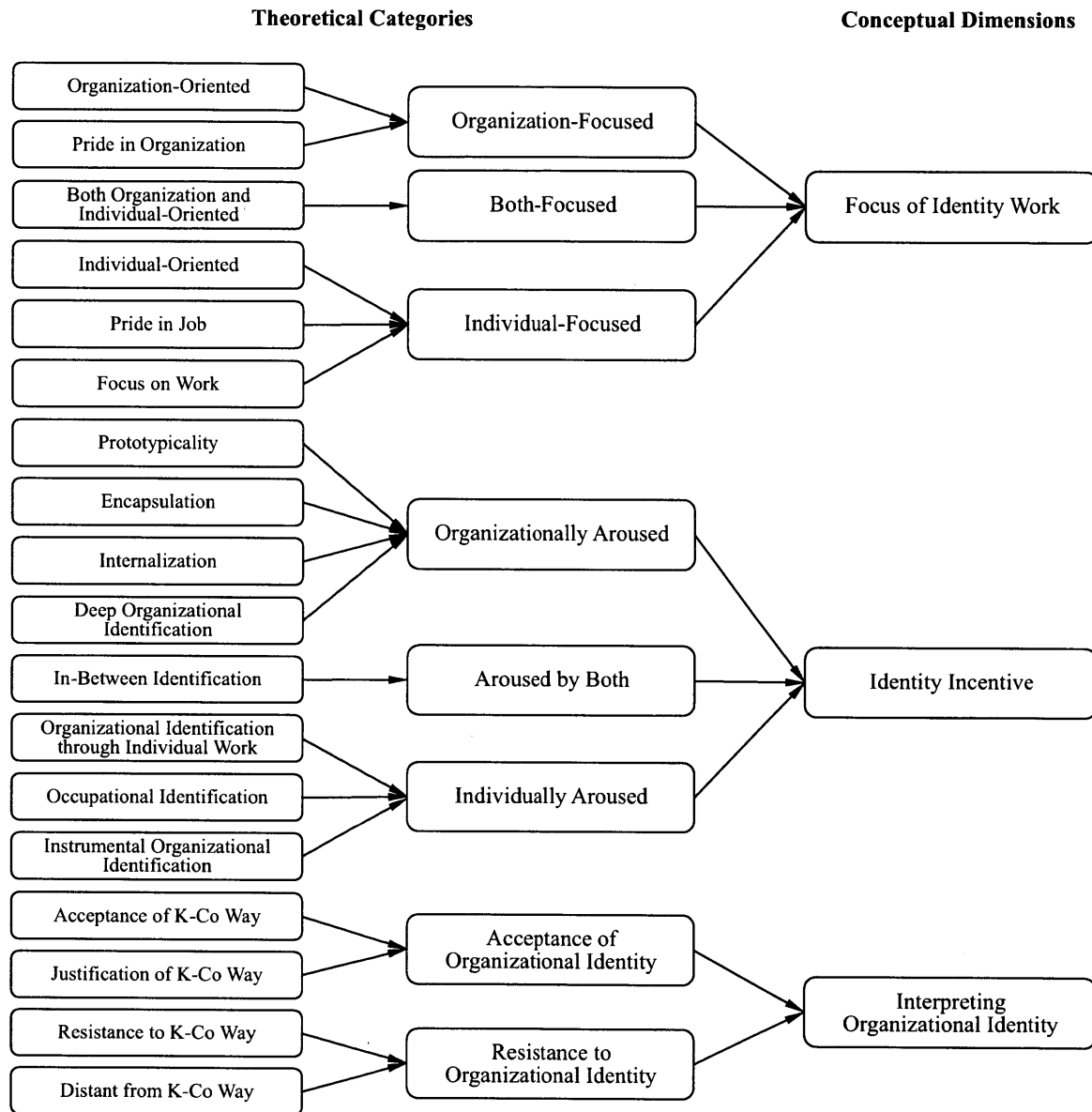
process I could sift through large amounts of data. As I consolidated the codes, they became more abstract and theoretical. I did this step of axial coding by moving iteratively back and forth between data and theory, and finally got a set of theoretical categories closely related to the theme of organizational identification and its occupational variations. For instance, to the question about the interviewee's perception of his or her work identity in organizational life, if the points in his or her answer wander around the attributes characterizing the K-Co-man identity or emphasizing his or her pride as a K-Co member, then I used the category of "organization-focused" to catch the meaning of that statement. If the interviewee's perception of work identity primarily starts with the emphasis on individuality or individual job rather than with describing oneself as a K-Co member, I coded it as "individual-focused." Throughout this process of axial coding, it became salient that whether one perceives one's self-identity at work primarily centering on the attributes as a specific organizational member or on individual uniqueness is heavily affected by the occupation one holds.

The third stage of analysis involved aggregating theoretical categories, thus identifying conceptual dimensions. Once theoretical categories had been engendered, I looked for dimensions underlying these categories in order to understand how different theoretical categories fitted together into a coherent picture at the conceptual level. To illustrate, some categories seemed to be about how an employee reacts to and evaluates the specific attributes of K-Co and K-Co people, so I provided them the conceptual label of "interpreting organizational identity." Other categories were about what stimulates an employee's identity feelings that drive action or motivate effort, to which I gave the conceptual label of "identity incentive." At this last stage of analysis, departmental—occupational—differences in employees' identity work became even more salient. Figure 4-1 summarizes the process by which I generated theoretical

categories through the two steps and moved to conceptual dimensions. Table 4-1 shows the description and illustrative quotes of each theoretical category, and Table 4-2 presents the counts of how many times the theoretical categories appeared by department, that is, occupation. The detailed meanings underlying these counts will be explained in the following sections.

FIGURE 4-1

Coding Scheme

Theoretical Categories   **Conceptual Dimensions**

| Organization-Oriented |
| Pride in Organization | → | Organization-Focused |

| Both Organization and Individual-Oriented | → | Both-Focused | → | Focus of Identity Work |

| Individual-Oriented |
| Pride in Job |
| Focus on Work | → | Individual-Focused |

| Prototypicality |
| Encapsulation |
| Internalization |
| Deep Organizational Identification | → | Organizationally Aroused |

| In-Between Identification | → | Aroused by Both | → | Identity Incentive |

| Organizational Identification through Individual Work |
| Occupational Identification |
| Instrumental Organizational Identification | → | Individually Aroused |

| Acceptance of K-Co Way |
| Justification of K-Co Way | → | Acceptance of Organizational Identity |

| Resistance to K-Co Way |
| Distant from K-Co Way | → | Resistance to Organizational Identity | → | Interpreting Organizational Identity |

TABLE 4-1
Descriptions and Illustrative Quotes of Theoretical Categories

Theoretical Categories	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Focus of identity work: Organization-focused	Defining self-identity primarily based on what characterizes the attributes of the organization; Viewing self from the organization's perspective	"I strongly think I'm a K-Co man because the value system K-Co pursues corresponds to the value system I pursue. I think I'm a K-Co man because of this value congruence, not because of the simple fact that I belong to K-Co." "I can have more self-esteem based on the fact that I belong to this organization having the leading company image." "This organization's goal almost equals my own goal." "I'm not saying I lack personal uniqueness. I rather say I have quite a strong personality. However, many time I find myself keeping talking about the organization unwittingly from the organizations' perspective, as if that's me."
Individual-focused	Perceiving self-identity at work with a primary focus on individuality or individual job rather than describing oneself as a member of the organization	"I would say the work I do, rather than the name of the company where I work, defines me." "I think... throughout the work experiences in three different companies... my primary concern has been always my career rather than something about the company... I worked hard, learned a lot, and received much recognition... all was sort of investment in myself, I think... Rather than for the organization's sake, it has been for my sake... for a better career development, better engineering skills... I've always given my priority to these matters, not to the organization."
Both-focused	Defining self-identity based both on the prototypicality of the organizational members and on personal uniqueness.	"This organization defines me a lot. Especially, when I, as a representative of K-Co, stand in front of the outside business customers to give a presentation about our business, I'm a 100% K-Co man .... When I meet with people outside K-Co, I bring out this identity of a hardworking K-Co man full of energy. But I'm not always prone to this K-Co way. I think the most crucial ability that the marketing job requires is an individual's creativity, and sometimes this hard-drive culture of K-Co doesn't fit this need. So, I also try to diminish the extent to which K-Co defines me. I try to keep my uniqueness ...... For a better performance, I need to be myself."
Identity incentive: Organizationally aroused	Motivated to become a prototypical organizational member by internalizing organizationally espoused values, attitudes, and behavioral norms; Having deep organizational identification	"I always try to keep in mind K-Co's core values and philosophy, and actually these concepts are directly applied to my work. I feel I'm always saying something cool about K-Co. I'm brainwashing myself this way, maybe." "I feel I'm getting standardized. I am, originally, meticulous, but the K-Co way must have been strengthening this disposition of mine much more ...... At first, I was just copying what others were doing, whether it's right or wrong, but as time goes by, it was just internalized into myself. Even outside the workplace, these behavioral patterns hold, in the same way."

Continued

111

TABLE 4-1
Continued

Theoretical Categories	Description	Illustrative Quotes
Individually aroused	Motivated to be competent in individual work and occupation; Seeking the organizational membership when it would help individual work and career	"I do not work hard only because I belong to K-Co or I am a K-Co man. Under the given condition that I'm supposed to work with other peer engineers within the K-Co boundary, the most rational mindset I can take is that through the interactions and mutual help with my peers I make money and achieve my individual technical goals as an engineer. Once I think this way, the K-Co boundary doesn't seem that meaningful." "What I mean by I like the organization is basically about my job and my work. It's all about work. I'm satisfied with my work and I like this organizational environments and infrastructures through which I can engender my individual technological achievements and develop myself as an engineer. Currently I don't want to move into another company, but if I do, people in that company would expect that I'm a very competent engineer because I have the work experience at K-Co."
Aroused by both	Motivated to be competent in individual work and occupation, but also incorporating the prototypicality of the organizational members while working	"We marketers frequently contact with the outside customers and service companies, and when interacting with them, I keep imbuing myself with the idea of what a K-Co employee should be like, such that I should do this because I work for K-Co and I shouldn't do that because I belong to K-Co. But, I always think this is my job. This work represents my ability and identity as a marketing expert, and I am responsible for it. I always think, through this I can learn more about marketing and accumulate my marketing knowledge. I've never thought I do this only for the company's sake." "Loyalty is not from money. It's through work. It is generated when I feel self-accomplishment or pride in my work, and finally feel that the organization recognizes the value of my work and supports it. I think K-Co has given me lots of opportunities to develop my professional skills. I have the mindset that I do everything for my company. The work for me equals to the work for my company. Identification! My wife often tells me that I just look addicted to K-Co-ism."
Interpreting organizational identity: Acceptance of organizational identity	Interpreting organizational identity and culture with a positive lens; Justifying the attributes and identity of the organization	"It's true that the current K-Co system seems to be too tight, but as long as it tries to change the system with a new vision, I see this company with a positive lens. People of old generation have their own culture, and I think it should be recognized as it is. What's important is that they are trying to shift the system and culture. Though K-Co is a global company, it doesn't make sense to expect K-Co will have the culture of American companies. Now it's going through a transition period and change is slow, but I believe it's heading to the right direction."
Resistance to organizational identity	Interpreting organizational identity and culture with a negative lens; Criticizing the attributes and identity of the organization	"As a whole, K-Co is now strongly emphasizing that the espoused employee identity is the employee of creativity. A creative, positive, and challenging worker. That's what K-Co expects from its employees. The main issues that the chairperson recently raised, all center on creativity. However, what's going on in the real workplaces is… so called agricultural sincerity is still a very important virtue that K-Co employees are expected to have. Substantially this doesn't seem to have been changing. Whatever instructed, simply following it. Even though the instruction is wrong, just doing it diligently. This attitude still underlies the K-Co culture."

TABLE 4-2
Summary of Coding Results: Counts by Department

Theoretical Categories	HR (N=16)		Engineering (N=23)		Marketing (N=10)	
Focus of identity work:						
Organization-focused	15	(94%)	10	(43%)	7	(70%)
Both-focused	3	(19%)	11	(48%)	7	(70%)
Individual-focused	4	(25%)	17	(74%)	7	(70%)
Identity incentive:						
Organizationally aroused	14	(88%)	8	(35%)	4	(40%)
Aroused by both	2	(13%)	8	(35%)	9	(90%)
Individually aroused	1	(6%)	15	(65%)	4	(40%)
Interpreting organizational identity:						
Acceptance	16	(100%)	11	(48%)	10	(100%)
Resistance	4	(25%)	18	(78%)	7	(70%)

Note: The numbers of the interviewees who mentioned a particular theoretical category are reported. In the interview, each interviewee can make assertions that fall into any of theoretical categories within a conceptual dimension, and thus the counts of theoretical categories in a particular conceptual dimension can exceed the total number of interviewees.

FINDINGS: OVERVIEW

Inductive data analysis shows salient differences in employees' identity work at K-Co depending on the department one belongs to. This implies that even within the strong cultural context of K-Co, the occupation one holds in a specific department may be closely related to how one perceives oneself as a K-Co man.

As I looked into the data from the employees of each department, three main findings became manifest. First, at the individual level, I found that whether the starting point of an individual's identity work [*focus of identity work*] is the organization or the individual depends on the department that he or she is in. When asked about the perception of who they are in the organization, HR staff members emphasized the importance of the organization they belong to in constructing their self-concept, while most of the engineers weighted more their individual uniqueness rather than organizationally espoused employee attributes in describing their identities at work. Marketers emphasized the importance of both organization and individual in constructing their self-identity at K-Co. This differentiated focus of identity work has influence on employees' incentive for integrating or not the organizationally espoused employee identity— the K-Co man identity—into their self-identities [*identity incentive*] and also on how they accept or resist the strong identity of K-Co and K-Co man [*interpreting organizational identity*]. For HR staff, with their skewed identity focus on the organization side, their identity incentive is strongly aroused by the organization: they have the incentive to be a prototypical K-Co man and they mostly take a positive lens in interpreting K-Co's organizational identity. However, engineers primarily desire to be a competent engineer rather than a K-Co man. This means that their identity incentive is not aroused by the organizational drive, but heavily by their individualities (individual engineering expertise or individual career aspiration as an engineer),

114

which often leads engineers to take a negative, rather than a positive, opinion about K-Co's organizational identity. Finally, marketers show duality. Their identity incentive is aroused by both organization and individual, and their interpretation of the organizational identity of K-Co tends to be neutral by taking both positive and negative lenses.

Second, I interpret these varying patterns in individual identity work among the K-Co employees as essentially induced from the identity of the "occupation" they are engaged in. As depicted in Figure 4-2, where the occupation is located in the relation between organization and individual differs among the departments. I conceptualize this varying attribute of each occupation in terms of its "transparency" of organizational identity—how transparently the organizational identity is projected on the identity of each occupation. For HR staff, their occupational identity is perceived as deeply ingrained in the specific organizational context. They describe the main job of the HR department at K-Co is characterized as embodying K-Co's specific core values and management philosophy with HR tools such as selection, training, and promotion. This means that the identity of the HR occupation may heavily reflect what characterizes the organization or what the organization pursues, and thus I call the HR occupation an *organizationally transparent occupation* to denote much overlap between occupational identity of HR staff and organizational identity of K-Co and relatively little overlap between their occupational identity and individual identity. In other words, for HR people, what characterizes their occupation mostly comes from what characterizes the organization. On the contrary, engineers' occupation is defined primarily based on their individual technical specialties and expertise that can be used wherever needed. The engineering occupation is essentially rooted in individual technical know-how achieved through engineering-specific education, training, and career patterns, and thus their occupational identity is not necessarily

bound to the specific organizational context or needs, making their occupational skills transferrable to other organizations. Hence, in describing the identity of the engineering occupation I use the term *organizationally opaque occupation* to denote little overlap between their occupational identity and organizational identity of K-Co. What characterizes the identity of the engineering occupation, rather, mostly comes from what characterizes engineers' individual identity. Finally, like engineers, marketers' individuality—individually unique marketing expertise generally usable across organizations—takes a significant part in defining their occupational identity. However, marketers have frequent interactions with outside stakeholders around various marketing issues regarding "K-Co" products, which makes the identity of K-Co salient during their work. This implies marketers' occupational identity is ingrained in the specific organizational context as well, and thus marketer's occupational identity is both individual- and organization-oriented, showing a dual overlap with both individual and organizational identities. I use the term *organizationally translucent occupation* to denote this attribute of the marketing occupation. After all, these structural differences in occupational identity across the three departments within K-Co affect K-Co employees' individual identity work: how transparently embedded the occupation is in the specific K-Co's organizational context moderates whether K-Co employees put an emphasis on individual attributes or on organizational attributes in their identity alignment process, which in turn determines their level of identification with K-Co.

FIGURE 4-2
Relationships among Organizational, Individual, and Occupational Identities

HR staff   Marketers   Engineers
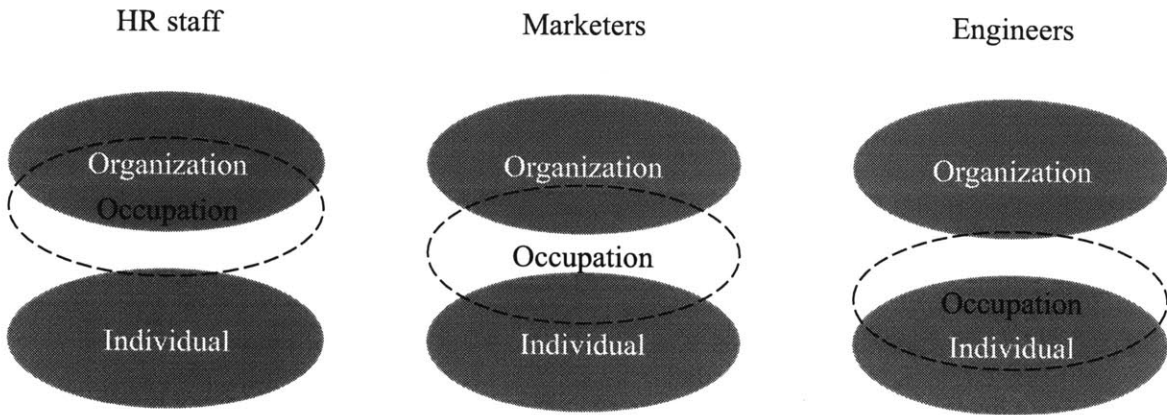
Finally, based on both occupational- and individual-level traits related to employees' identity work at K-Co, I draw a core-periphery map of organizational identification that conceptualizes the horizontal variation of K-Co employees' organizational identification across occupational groups. For HR staff, their occupational identity is structured as deeply embedded in the organization and so their individual identity work is organization-oriented, which locates them at the core of the organizational identification map where employees' organizational identification stays strong and high. In contrast, engineers' occupational identity, ingrained in their individual specialties, tends to be structured independent of the specific organizational context and thus their individual identity work centers on individual attributes, not those of K-Co. Thus, on the map that indicates the horizontal variation of employees' organizational identification at K-Co, engineers are located at the periphery where employees' identification with the organization is weak and faint. Marketers' occupational identity and their individual identity work are neither organization- nor individual-skewed, which places them at the middle of the organizational identification map: their organizational identification is stronger than engineers' but weaker than HR staff people's. Figure 4-3 depicts this core-periphery map of organizational identification.

FIGURE 4-3

Core-Periphery Map of Organizational Identification
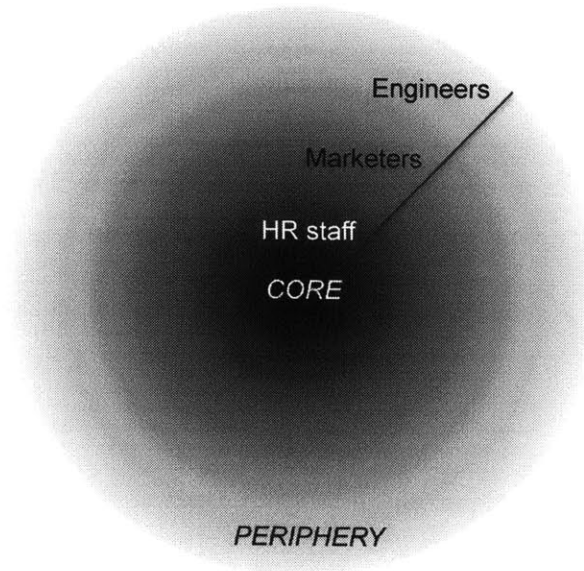
Note: The color denotes the strength of organizational identification. The darker the color, the stronger the organizational identification. Specifically, HR people show strong organizational identification at the core, whereas engineers show weak organizational identification at the periphery of the map.

Table 4-3 summarizes the overview of findings by department, and more details of occupational differences in employees' organizational identification are presented in the following sections. In reporting the interview data, I identify interviewees by assigning them the initial letter of their department (H, E, or M) and a number. The notation [E #4], for instance, indicates a quote from the 4th engineer interviewee.

TABLE 4-3
Summary of Findings by Department

	HR	Engineering	Marketing
Individual identity work:			
Focus of identity work	Organization-oriented	Individual-oriented	Both individual- and organization-oriented
Identity incentive	Organizationally prototypical	Individually competent	Both organizationally prototypical and individually competent
Interpreting organizational identity	Organization-acceptive	Organization-resistant	Both acceptive and resistant
Occupational identity:			
Nature	Organizationally transparent	Organizationally opaque	Organizationally translucent
Internal meaning	Powerful at the top	Powerless at the bottom	Relatively powerless and relatively powerful
External meaning	Powerless with low employability	Powerful with high employability	Getting powerful with increasing employability
Location on the organizational identification map	Core	Periphery	Middle

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Individual Identity Work

Focus of identity work: Organization-focused. As reported in Table 4-2, fifteen of 16

HR staff (94%) emphasized the salient and important meaning of K-Co and K-Co man, when

asked about their perception of "who I am at work." Specifically, one HR staff noted, "This

organization's goal almost equals my own goal" (H #9) and another interviewee said, "I can have

more self-esteem based on the fact that I belong to this organization having the leading company

image" (H #8). These quotes reveal the strength of the organizational influence on HR people's

identity construction at work. In some cases, HR people's organization-focused identity work

reach even outside the organizational boundary: "Even when I'm not at the workplace, I cannot

stop thinking that I'm a K-Co man and must behave K-Co man-like" (H #16). For HR staff, the

organization tends to take over an individual's identity, which implies that the primary focus of

their identity work in their organizational life lies in what characterizes the attributes of the

organization: "I always ask myself if I'm a world-class employee of a world-class company" (H

#3). Put differently, their identity work is skewed to K-Co's identity, thus rendering

idiosyncratic personal attributes relatively faint: "I'm not saying I lack personal uniqueness. I

rather say I have quite a strong personality. However, many times I find myself keeping talking

about the organization unwittingly from the organization's perspective, as if that's me" (H #11).

Identity incentive: Being organizationally prototypical. According to Anteby (2008),

identity incentive is defined as "the selective positive arousal of identity feelings that induce

action or motivate effort" (p. 203). I found that, with their organization-skewed focus of identity

work, HR people's identity incentive is primarily aroused by something organizational. HR

people enact their own "desired identity" (Anteby, 2008; Schlenker, 1985) by adopting the

organizationally espoused identity, that is, the prototypical K-Co man identity. To realize their

identity incentive, HR people need to internalize and are encapsulated by the specific K-Co way,

that is, HR people have a high need for organizational identification (Glynn, 1998): "I always try

to keep in mind K-Co's core values and philosophy, and actually these concepts are directly

applied to my work. I feel I'm always saying something cool about K-Co. I'm brainwashing

myself this way, maybe" (H #9). An HR staff described how the organization-oriented identity

focus and incentive play out in her life as follows:

> I feel I'm getting standardized. I am, originally, meticulous, but the K-Co way must have
> been strengthening this disposition of mine much more. Logical thinking, how to solve
> the problem... whatever a problem is, I always define, measure, and analyze the problem,
> and then get an improvement plan... I'm always using a planner and always under the
> pressure of time management... At first, I was just copying what others were doing,
> whether it's right or wrong, but as time goes by, it was just internalized into myself.
> Even outside the workplace, these behavioral patterns hold, in the same way. Many
> people at K-Co around me are standardized this way. Even when they don't agree, if the
> organization wants it, they just do it. They put more emphasis on the organizational color
> rather than on their personal color. (H #12)

Interpreting organizational identity: Acceptance rather than resistance. Interestingly,

all HR staff interviewees described their organization through a positive lens. As shown in Table

4-2, even the four interviewees (25%) who raised some negative aspects of K-Co held the

positive perspective towards K-Co as well. This result reveals that, based on their organization-

oriented identity focus and incentive, HR staff tend to accept—rather than resist—and justify—

rather than criticize—K-Co's organizational identity and culture. They are apt to understand and

interpret what they experience in organizational life in an affirmative way (e.g., "I can't think of

any negative impacts coming from the fact that I'm a K-Co man" (H #4), "I've heard quite

frequently that I'm a religious fanatic to K-Co-ism" (H #15).), which is correlated with their high

level of pride in the organization. HR people's information collection on K-Co is somewhat

selective: they try to gather positive information about the organization and when facing negative

information, they bring in a justification mechanism, replacing their personal viewpoints with the

organization's collective standpoint. For example, an HR staff said, "Whenever facing some

organizational policies that look unfair or inhuman, I tend to think that there must be some

organizational circumstances and inevitable reasons for these, or I try to accept them thinking I

might find the same in other organizations too" (H #13). The following quote articulates the

nature of HR people's attitudes towards their company:

> Figuratively speaking… people doing HR are taking opium, continuously and regularly. HR people are continuously ruminating the idea that I'm CEO's beloved. This is truly opium! In an extreme case, some HR people are just upset, yelling "How come you don't catch his [CEO's] hidden point?!" But, I think, thanks to these people, this organization can be moving forward. What's really ironical is, when these people get demoted… you may easily guess that they must be venomous toward the organization, but, actually, they don't seek revenge. Rather, they just grieve, self-deprecating… finding what's wrong with themselves, not with the company… I would say what's conquered by opium is not just China! (H #11)

Occupational Identity

In this section, I decompose the identity of the HR occupation, and I interpret the

occupation as a significant situational factor that affects individuals' identity work. In my

original interview protocol[12], I did not include questions directly asking about the interviewees'

perception of their job and occupation. However, in the course of describing their notion of

identity work, interviewees frequently raised the issues on occupation that heavily influence their

identity construction processes at K-Co. Situational and structural factors are important inputs in

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[12] In the interview protocol, questions regarding identity work basically stayed around the notion of the organization and its influence on an individual's identity work. Example questions are:
  1. How do you feel about yourself as a K-Co employee?
  2. How does the fact that you work at K-Co affect your self-concept?
  3. Do you feel more like part of the company than you did on your first day here? What do you think has changed since your entry into K-Co?
  4. Do you remember any situation or particular time when you felt that you were becoming part of the company? Or do you remember any situation or particular time when you felt that you did NOT belong to the company?
  5. How has K-Co's system or culture influenced your feeling this way?

shaping individuals' sense of self (Kreiner et al., 2006; Pratt, 2000; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), and I found that in an employee's organizational identification—an identity alignment process between individual and organization—one's occupation, as an additional situational factor other than the organization, plays a significant moderating role. This implies that the nature of occupational identity needs to be analyzed to fully capture the dynamics of K-Co employees' identity work.

Nature: Organizationally transparent occupation. According to HR staff, the main job of the HR department at K-Co is characterized as "transmitting the organization's core values and management philosophy to other employees and evaluate people on the basis of them" (H #16). Specifically, HR people select the applicants who have the potential to fit K-Co's management philosophy, train and educate the employees to internalize the K-Co way and culture, evaluate and compensate the employees based on their contribution to K-Co's performance, promote the employees who show the abilities to improve K-Co's growth. Put differently, HR people embody HRM practices that "provide shared meanings about the corporate universe, thus being instrumental in sustaining the normative order" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007, p. 712). Hence, the identity of K-Co and K-Co man has significant influences on every decision making process in the HR department, which implies that the HR occupation is deeply embedded in the specific organizational context of K-Co (e.g., "To the job applicant, I am the company. Because that person would see K-Co and form the impression of K-Co through me" (H #11), "Without the organization, I cannot even think of my job or my career" (H #1).), and thus the identity of the HR occupation may be conceptualized as *organizationally transparent*, which means the organizational identity of K-Co is directly thus transparently projected onto the identity of the HR occupation. The following two quotes from HR staff

124

illustrate how transparently the organizational core attributes and cultural elements are and should be reflected in how this occupation of HR is formulated and processed:

> A person who doesn't love K-Co cannot do the HR job, because his or her value system is not likely to fit K-Co's. All K-Co's policies, management philosophy, core values... HR staff members need to feel sympathy toward these. HR occupation is supposed to transmit them to other employees and evaluate people on the basis of them. If one doesn't agree with them, that person can't do the HR work. It must be hell... (H #16)

> HR is spiritual, conceptual, historical, and institutional. In order to guide, train, and develop people in the organization, HR people should know this organization very well. Just like a teacher must know what she's gonna teach well. Every employee at K-Co, to some extent, needs to know what K-Co is about, but I think HR people must have deeper knowledge and recognition of K-Co than anyone else. (H #15)

Internal meaning: Powerful actor at the top of the organization. At K-Co, HR people have frequent opportunities to contact top managers who initiate organizational strategies and resource distribution, because HR staff's occupation is defined to convey and execute top managers' decisions with various HR administrative tools. As one interviewee mentioned, "Through the HR functions, a CEO's philosophy is transmitted. In a sense, HR people are just like servants for him. But, with frequent interactions with him, sometimes I feel like I myself am a CEO! My job is structured to know and understand the CEO's opinions well" (H #9). This statement reveals that the HR occupation is perceived to be directly empowered by the organizational core authority (the management), which leads HR staff to believe that the HR department also holds the core, thereby powerful, position in the departmental hierarchy within K-Co. Another quote from an HR staff confirms this finding:

> What does HR do? Basically, HR manages certain institutions by which every K-Co employee is influenced. If someone argues HR has power, I would say, yes, HR has power. But this power is not for the HR department's sake, but for the whole organization's sake. By power, I mean a propelling power. Driving force. In such an extremely large organization as K-Co, when HR staff are trying to re-organize... in order to dispose the right persons for the right positions... they're always facing the conflicts of interests among groups and departments... everyone says his or her preferences... like I don't want to move to that group, I want to move to this group, I want to do that, I don't

want to do this, I don't want to send my subordinate there, I don't want to work with that guy... If everybody were equally empowered, coordinating all these interests would be impossible. In the coordinating and adjusting processes, what's significant is CEO's power, not HR people's power, because CEO holds the authority and power for the final decision. But since this CEO cannot solely investigate all these matters, his job needs to be delegated to others, who are HR staff. (H #15)

Accordingly, the incumbents of this occupation are supposed to retain a wide scope—organization-wide scope, not a specific functional department's localized or myopic scope—mirroring the management's perspectives in perceiving, understanding, and interpreting how work is organized and processed in K-Co. This internal meaning of the HR occupation can also be seen in the following quote:

I often help organize the meetings among the top management people. Though I'm not directly involved in discussion in those meetings, I can always observe them, listen to what they think, and get a broad sense of how this big company is organized and how overall business goals and strategies are set up, so that I also can have a wide scope in understanding this company. (H #10)

External meaning: Powerless actor with low employability. Deeply ingrained and incubated in the organizational context, the HR occupation is "inward-oriented" (H #12) and minutely customized only for K-Co. Also, essentially, the HR job—managing and controlling people—tends to be "abstract, so HR people's performance is hard to quantify" (H #11). Due to these occupational characteristics, HR staff's employability is relatively low in the external labor market, and HR people's careers are apt to be bound only to K-Co. However, in reverse, this boundness leads HR people to perceive their experiences at K-Co as occupationally more meaningful and feel more attached to K-Co. As one interviewee noted, "At K-Co, thanks to this company's big size, HR people can learn a lot. Different from other organizations where HR is just responsible for operating, here at K-Co, I can do everything. Planning, operating, and feedback" (H #8). Finally, because of this exclusive nature of HR at K-Co, hiring experienced

126

HR professionals having past work experiences in other companies is extremely rare. The external meaning of the HR occupation is well described in the following quote:

> For HR people, moving to another company is very rare, or, in a sense, impossible. The HR at K-Co is a specific HR for a big organization. How can an HR practitioner having the experience of organization management in the company of 1000 people do organization management in the company of only 10 people? HR staff members at K-Co don't have an incentive of turnover. Actually, they can't move to somewhere else. All HR people around me have been always doing HR and will be always doing HR. Once HR, forever HR! They are just branded as the HR staff. Also, the HR department at K-Co is very exclusive. They don't recruit from outside. A pool of fresh newcomers who just graduated from college is selected and nurtured only for HR. Because of this trait, HR group has high coherence and integrity. (H #11)

Mapping Organizational Identification: HR Staff at the Core

Based on both individual and occupational stories regarding identity work described so far, I here map the organizational identification of the employees at the HR department. HR staff desire to be what the organization desires them to be, because they are in charge of the occupation whose identity is deeply organization-grounded, thereby *organizationally transparent*. In this sense, HR people's identity incentive is both occupationally and organizationally consistent: as transmitters of the organization's strongly established core values, philosophy, and policies, they need to enact the organizationally espoused identity, the K-Co man. To be occupationally recognized, they need to internalize the specific K-Co way and culture, thus being cognitively and affectively encapsulated by what the core management at K-Co strongly pursues, which enables them to hold power in the departmental hierarchy within K-Co. Based on this occupational identity and their individual identity reaction to it, HR people are located at the *core* of the organizational identification map—they strongly and deeply identify with K-Co, and their occupational identification consistently supports and confirms their strong organizational identification. HR people's low employability also confirms their sole identification focus,

which is the organization—K-Co. Figure 4-3 shows the core position of HR staff in the core-periphery map of organizational identification.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Individual Identity Work

Focus of identity work: Individual-oriented. Of the 23 engineers I interviewed, 17 engineers (74%) emphasized their individuality when asked about their identity work at K-Co (see Table 4-2). K-Co has a relatively weak meaning in engineers' identity work, as an engineer articulated: "I would say the work I do, rather than the name of the company where I work, defines me" (E #16). As long as K-Co provides various organizational resources with which engineers can achieve their individual professional desires and goals (e.g., "Because I work in this organization [K-Co], there certainly are some professional opportunities to try working on the products which I cannot even try if I'm in a small company. I see a lot of possibilities I can try only here" (E #15).), this organization's identity has certain meanings in engineers' work identity construction processes—almost 50% of the engineers described that their identity work centers on both organization and individual, as shown in Table 4-2. However, engineers' valued identities and self-image are largely primed by the unique occupational specialties that each individual holds (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). That is, engineers' focus of identity work is primarily on the individual side—their individual work or job by doing which their individualities (individual engineering specialties) are realized—thus making the organization's influence on their identity work relatively faint: "The K-Co I know is the job I do!" (E #2) The following quote clearly exemplifies engineers' salient identity focus on individual:

> I think... throughout the work experiences in three different companies... my primary concern has been always my career rather than something about the company... I worked

hard, learned a lot, and received much recognition... all was sort of investment in myself, I think... Rather than for the organization's sake, it has been for my sake... for a better career development, better engineering skills... I've always given my priority to these matters, not to the organization. (E #18)

Identity incentive: Being individually competent. As presented in Table 4-2, a large

portion of engineer interviewees (65%) described that their identity incentive is individually

aroused. With the individual-skewed focus in their identity work, engineers primarily desire to

be a competent engineer throughout their individual career rather than a good K-Co man. In

order to be a versed engineer, they need to show individual technological achievements. This

occupational aspiration makes engineers' work motivation primarily directed towards enhancing

individual performance rather than towards improving organizational performance. As one

engineer noted, "I do not work hard only because I belong to K-Co or I am a K-Co man. Under

the given condition that I'm supposed to work with other peer engineers within the K-Co

boundary, the most rational mindset I can take is that through the interactions and mutual help

with my peers I make money and achieve my individual technical goals as an engineer. Once I

think this way, the K-Co boundary doesn't seem that meaningful" (E #16). Although, in many

cases, eventually individual and organizational performances may get more closely interrelated,

most engineers' identity incentive, in the first place, starts from the individual orientation rather

than from the organizational orientation: "I'm motivated by my job. My loyalty comes from my

high satisfaction with my job and high sense of responsibility for my job. So, I would call this

state of my mind the loyalty to my engineering job, not the loyalty to the company" (E #1). In

some cases, engineers' cognitive or emotional connection to the organization still seems to exist,

but it is embodied substantially through the mediation of individual work. For instance:

> What I mean by I like the organization is basically about my job and my work. It's all about work. I'm satisfied with my work and I like this organizational environment and infrastructure through which I can engender my individual technological achievements

129

and develop myself as an engineer. Currently I don't want to move into another company, but if I do, people in that company would expect that I'm a very competent engineer because I have the work experience at K-Co. (E #19)

While pursuing the individually aroused identity incentive, engineers' attitudes and behaviors at work could be often derailed from what K-Co expects from the typical K-Co men. This recalls the engineers that Kunda (1992) observed, who "created themselves within the constraints imposed on them" (p. 21). Especially, in the organization like K-Co that compels a strong organizational culture, value system, norms, and employee identity, engineers tend to think that their group is prone to be perceived as atypical ("We are the farthest from the mainstream organizational culture" (E #18).), and they form their own occupational— engineering—subculture (Guzman, Stam, & Stanton, 2008; Schein, 1992; Trice, 1993). The following quote from the interview with an engineer articulates the attributes of his own group— engineers at K-Co:

> People in the engineering department hold the image of nerdy and simple-hearted students of the engineering school and also the image of not being strategic. They are just doing their individual work, not caring about whatever the K-Co man image is. Since many engineers are workaholics, this image of engineers might match with the hardworking image of the K-Co man. But I feel categorizing engineers into the typical K-Co men who are mostly docile and obedient may not make sense. At least, many engineers are egoists with regard to their individual technical specialties. They have a strong pride in their expertise, and sometimes they aggressively compete and conflict. I've heard that the most troublesome group within K-Co is the engineer group. This may mean engineers have the tendency of breaking the rules. (E #10)

Interpreting organizational identity: Resistance rather than acceptance. Due to their individual-focused identity focus and incentive, engineers often think the K-Co way sets too much constraint, and thus is an obstacle to realizing their individual ideal: "Engineers are craving for something new and want to break the rules. Many times this is not welcomed under the strong organizational constraint" (E #11). Among engineers, K-Co's traditional way of organizational control is often regarded as what should be replaced with a new managerial way

130

that encourages employees' creativity. By and large, engineers tend to resist—rather than

accept—and criticize—rather than justify—K-Co's organizational identity and culture, and one

engineer even described K-Co as "the tomb of engineers" (E #23). Despite K-Co's public image

of a technology leader, engineers at K-Co—significant contributors to achieving this image—

argue that there still is a lot of room for organizational change. They acknowledge the

organizational resources and systems that K-Co provides for them—eleven engineers (48%)

mentioned positive aspects of K-Co way (see Table 4-2)—but a larger number of engineers (78%

of the interviewees) tend to focus more on K-Co's current structural limitations that prohibit their

individual aspiration from being attained. This pattern regarding engineers' interpretation of K-

Co's organizational identity is illustrated in the following example:

> I agree that K-Co is a global leading company, but I also feel something is still missing.
> With regard to K-Co's manufacturing system, I'm sure K-Co is truly good at mass
> production and process management and K-Co can make the products with very high
> quality faster than any other companies. Whenever I think of K-Co, I feel the image of a
> company having leading cutting-edge technology is somewhat weak, though. With
> respect to mass production and process management, K-Co has taken the absolute No.1
> position, whereas for innovative technology, K-Co doesn't hold that image. The image
> of "doing something smart" that Intel or IBM has, lacks at K-Co. This may be due to too
> much money K-Co has or K-Co's too big company size. K-Co doesn't know how to
> loosen. They only know how to tighten. Recently, K-Co seems to be emphasizing the
> importance of creativity management, introducing new policies, training and educating
> programs. But the change process is just retarded. As long as the real thoughts still
> haven't changed, any attempts for institutional changes are meaningless. (E #1)

Occupational Identity

Nature: Organizationally opaque occupation. Engineers at K-Co are professional

practitioners who design and develop solutions for technological systems and problems, based on

which all K-Co's products are manufactured. Their occupational identity could be defined as

engineering for "K-Co" products, but, simultaneously, engineers occupy a distinct occupational

identity that is not necessarily ingrained in the specific organizational context. By and large, the

engineering occupation is rooted in individual technical specialties and expertise attained

through engineering-specific education, training, career patterns, and peer relations, and these

occupationally unique characteristics of engineers are universally applied to any organizational

settings (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984; Zabusky & Barley, 1996). Put differently, for engineers,

what occupationally matters lies in *what* they do rather than in *where* they work: "What I pursue

as an engineer is to achieve my best wherever there is a good engineering opportunity" (E # 15).

Accordingly, engineers' occupational identity is likely to be defined independent of the specific

organizational context, rather closely related to each individual's engineering skills, that is, their

individualities. In their world of work, the effects of the organizational core attributes and

cultural traits are not that prominent, and engineers construct their own engineering culture,

which is centered on the occupation, rather than on the organization. Actually an engineer

revealed this attribute of the engineering occupation by saying that "I had worked in two

different companies for 10 years, and I've been here at K-Co for 2 years. I feel every

organization tends to be basically the same. Only slight differences among those three I can find.

I conclusively think the engineering groups in these three companies are very similar" (E # 17).

This implies that the organizational attributes of the specific company do not have a significant

input or are not projected in defining the engineering occupation, and thus engineers'

occupational identity may be conceptualized as *organizationally opaque*. The following quote

even more evidently shows this organizational-boundary-free nature of the engineering

occupation:

> If some day this company's name were to be changed to ABC[13], I would just do my job,
> just as I'm doing it now. I'm not bound to the K-Co brand. When I say that I like my
> company, I hope my company goes well, or I'm ready to support my company, this
> attitude of mine comes from my pride in my job that I'm doing in the company. Even if

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[13] A pseudonym for the Korean company that is a significant competitor to K-Co

all resources for executing my job were provided by ABC, that's fine with me, as long as ABC guarantees a sound work system for doing my job. (E #2)

Internal meaning: Powerless actor at the bottom of the organization. Many engineers tend to believe that they are at the bottom of the departmental hierarchy in K-Co. They think they are supposed, or forced, to do passively what others—the management or the department at the organization's top—already decided to make them do: "We are at the bottom of the food chain. We are supposed to be blamed for their [the management's] faults as if they were our faults. They even say that we engineers are a substitutable workforce, whatever they think they need!" (E #6) Interestingly enough, geographically as well, all engineering departments are located distant from the organizational core units that are mostly located in Seoul (the capital city of Korea). In very large engineering complexes located in somewhat isolated suburban areas, engineers do their work surrounded by a huge group of other peer K-Co engineers. In this occupational context, the color and identity of the organization that they belong to are just dim in their everyday work life. As an engineer described, "Engineers are far from something K-Co-like. Every early morning we go to the labs or plants located in the provinces. Actually, engineers in those labs or plants just rarely meet non-K-Co people. All people we meet at the workplace are K-Co people. With no reference groups, I have no chance to feel that I'm a K-Co man" (E #1). Structurally, engineers' scope in their work life is confined within the minute engineering work processes, and the bigger picture—how their engineering work is positioned in K-Co's overall business strategy and planning—is, even though it may be a critical issue for engineers as well as for the company, often out of their concern. This structural limit engineers are facing can be seen in the following quote:

> Power is given to staff… and… engineers tend to be regarded as a group of people who could be discarded or… replaced with new engineers having new technical knowledge and skills, according to the organizational needs. Organizationally, I don't feel that significant or core rights or responsibilities are given to engineers. The other day, a

survey has been conducted and there was an item asking about one's sense of belongingness. One choice was "I hear the news about K-Co from the newspapers first." I felt this exactly applies to my group. Sometimes I ask myself, "Are we really K-Co members?" (E #22)

External meaning: Powerful actor with high employability. Although powerless within

the organizational boundary, engineers believe they have power outside the organization: "We

engineers are likely to believe that if we don't like K-Co, we can move to anywhere. We think

we have alternative options, which may not be true for staff" (E # 7). In many cases, their

specific technical knowledge, skills, and expertise are not organizationally bound, and can be

applied to other organizational settings, so if they want, finding a new workplace that fits their

occupational specialties is relatively easy (Kalleberg & Berg, 1987). Engineers' occupational

identity is relatively independent of the immediate organization in which they are located, and

their commitment to specialized engineering skills makes their careers organization-free, thus

promoting their employability in the external labor market. Two statements illustrate:

> If, very frankly speaking, there's an alternative option of company, which is similar to and as well-organized as K-Co, there's no reason for me not to move into that option. I can still sell my specialties outside K-Co. Wherever I work, what's best for me comes from my best performance. Any organization that guarantees good engineering opportunities, I can go to. Where I work doesn't matter. (E #16)

> In some cases, engineers at K-Co move to the small firms that can never be competitors to K-Co. These firms willingly pay a large amount of employment deposit to these engineers having three years of work experience at K-Co. This means their value as an engineer just goes up. Though they move from a large firm to a small one, they can take charge of a more significant and influential engineering role in that new firm than they took at K-Co. (E #5)

Mapping Organizational Identification: Engineers at the Periphery

In terms of organizational identification, people in the engineering department tend to

separate what the organization desires them to be from what they individually desire to be. As

the identity of the engineering occupation is defined mostly based on individual engineering

skills and expertise, not being necessarily embedded in a specific organizational context—

thereby *organizationally opaque*—engineers' identity incentive mainly stems from their

individual work, not from the organization. As long as their daily work life is situated in a

certain organizational context, engineers need to be organizationally socialized—thus following

and accepting organizational norms and culture—but, by and large, their identification process

with the organization occurs in a distal and instrumental way. They more identify with the lower

identity foci such as workgroups and teams where their occupational boundary is saliently

defined than with the higher identity foci such as the organization (cf. van Knippenberg & van

Schie, 2000; Riketta & van Dick, 2005). Their psychological connection to the organization is

mostly bridged through the monetary rewards or benefits from the organization that may help

their individual career development. As an interviewee noted, "Engineers' attachment to the

organization primarily comes from the thought that what I have been doing in this organization

will help me towards a better career path" (E #4). Engineers' distal identity connection to the

organization and their perception of the engineering group's powerless position within K-Co, in

line with their organizationally opaque occupation, locate engineers at the *periphery* of the

organizational identification map: even within K-Co's strong organizational culture, engineers

do not necessarily identify with the organization. In the process of their work identity

construction, K-Co does not contain a significant meaning. The following quote illustrates the

peripheral characteristics of engineers' identification with K-Co:

> I wouldn't say that I never get angry when people outside K-Co blindly criticize K-Co.
> But, when I hear this criticism, I also think the object of their insult is only the people at
> the headquarters, and as long as I'm a mere researcher, I have nothing to do with that
> criticism. We, engineers, neither have been involved in the headquarters' planning
> processes, nor hold any power, just following their decisions. So, when people outside
> criticize K-Co, most engineers' immediate reaction is "They curse K-Co because K-Co
> deserves to be cursed, don't you think?" I can't leave out the idea that we are far away

135

from the core. If I feel unpleasant when someone criticizes K-Co, that's because the criticizer's logic doesn't make sense, not because that person criticizes K-Co. (E #1)

Within-variation: Organizationally hooked engineers. Not all engineers are organizationally peripheral. For some engineers, their connection to K-Co includes a significant meaning in their work life, because they perceive their occupation is relatively well aligned with the organization. Although, on the whole, the engineering occupation tends to be characterized as not bound to the specific organizational context, within that, some technical specialties are more actively supported by the organization.

Since K-Co is such a large company, there are various business units within it, and the level of technology for product development varies across the units. Depending on K-Co's overall corporate strategy and goal, each business unit may be positioned on the continuum of future technology business vs. traditional technology business and/or on the continuum of key technology business vs. minor business. This classification of business units may be related to the organization's differentiated support and resource distribution to each unit. The following quote articulates how an engineer's perception of the technological positioning of his unit among various K-Co's engineering departments affects his attitudes towards the organization:

> For what do I work here? The most important reason... would be for making a living. Then... manifesting my technical skills would be the second reason... and lastly for organizational development. Since this is such a large firm, my share for organizational development and change would be minuscule... my work wouldn't have significant influences. Also... the work I'm doing is not about developing such high technology. Just... it's just applying preexisting technology to the products... and... PS [profit sharing] in my business unit has been getting decreased. There must be some differences in PS among business units. Popular business units like cell phone or LCD... these units' profit must be continuously growing, different from my unit... So, all engineers are suffering from heavy workload, but engineers' loyalty levels would differ depending on the unit they're in. (E #20)

Variation in technology and organizational support leads to variation in engineers' organizational identification. When an engineer is a member of the key business unit—having

shown a significant growth or holding a promising future growth opportunity—his or her

occupational identification is more likely to converge to organizational identification (Bartol,

1979; Lachman & Aranya, 1986). For this group of engineers, their occupational identity is no

longer defined as organizationally opaque or powerless in the departmental hierarchy, because it

is re-defined as deeply ingrained in the organizational context on the basis of the organization's

recognition of the importance of that specific engineering technology. As such, their focus of

identity work does not remain only on the individual side, but embraces the organizational side.

As one interviewee noted, "For engineers, how loyalty toward the organization is generated is

quite simple. Loyalty is not from money. It's through work. It is generated when I feel self-

accomplishment or pride in my work, and finally feel that the organization recognizes the value

of my work and supports it" (E #11). With the organization's prominent support that enables

one's individual occupational aspiration to be realized, engineers, in reciprocity, exert their work

efforts not only for their individual career development—individually aroused identity

incentive—but also for the organizational development—organizationally aroused identity

incentive. In other words, their individual-oriented identity work is *hooked* by the organization,

thus leading to their high organizational identification. One interviewee described how

organizational recognition works in boosting engineers' organizational identification this way:

> I was a member of a project that the very top management is highly interested in. I was
> in charge of memory design, and I was frequently told that whether we could succeed in
> developing this new flash memory world first would significantly depend on the design
> step. Luckily, we succeeded in developing that memory, several newspapers reported
> this achievement, and finally we received a very prestigious award for technological
> excellence. That flash memory was such a remarkable product. Throughout all these
> processes regarding this product development, I was highly motivated. First, I was happy
> that I had the chance to be involved in such a job that could significantly contribute to the
> organization. Also, personally, the job had the meaning that I'm doing a world-class
> engineering project. Fully identifying myself with the organization, I could really enjoy
> the job. (E #19)

Figure 4-4 presents the peripheral position of engineers in the core-periphery map of

organizational identification. Within-variation is depicted with the arrow.

FIGURE 4-4

Core-Periphery Map of Organizational Identification: Within-Variations

138
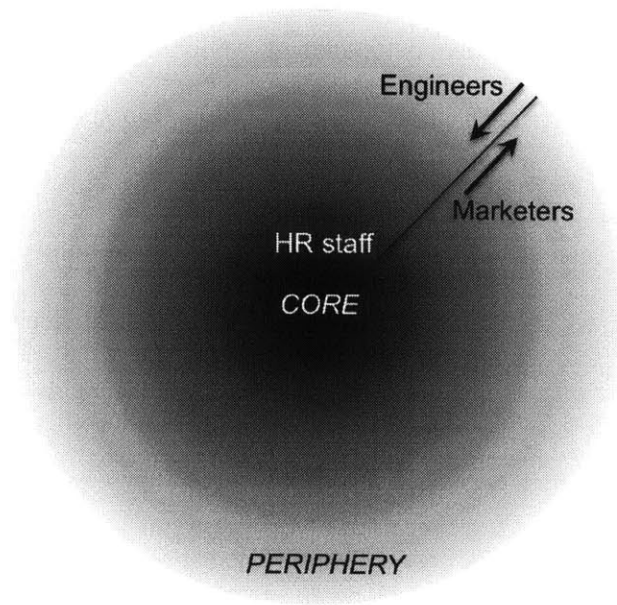
MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Individual Identity Work

Focus of identity work: Both individual- and organization-oriented. As presented in

Table 4-2, marketer's focus of identity work is equally distributed to both organization and

individual. When asked about the perception of their identity at work, seven out of 10 marketers

mentioned the salient meaning of the organization in their identity work, but the same number of

marketers also emphasized the importance of their individually unique identity as a professional

marketer in defining their self-concepts at K-Co. Marketers presented a wide spectrum of their

identity focus between individual and organization. At one extreme, one interviewee said, "I

don't care much about what a K-Co man is. Sometimes I jokingly call myself K-Co man, but

I'm not sure how much I fit that image. I'm not concerned with K-Co culture, K-Co man,

something like that. Why should I care? What matters to me is what work I'm doing as a

marketer. If I've changed my identity since I entered K-Co, that's not because K-Co imposes me

to change, but because I feel I need to change in order to do my work effectively in this

organization" (M #3). At the other extreme, a marketer noted, "I strongly think I'm a K-Co man

because the value system K-Co pursues corresponds to the value system I pursue" (M #7).

However, many of the marketers (70%) also revealed a balanced focus of identity work, as

shown in Table 4-2 ("both-focused"). For example:

> This organization defines me a lot. Especially, when I, as a representative of K-Co, stand
> in front of the outside business customers to give a presentation about our business, I'm a
> 100% K-Co man. K-Co's vantage point is that it has a strong organizational drive, and
> affected by this atmosphere, I put all my efforts to meet the organizational needs. When I
> meet with people outside K-Co, I bring out this identity of a hardworking K-Co man full
> of energy. But I'm not always prone to this K-Co way. I think the most crucial ability
> that the marketing job requires is an individual's creativity, and sometimes this hard-
> drive culture of K-Co doesn't fit this need. So, I also try to diminish the extent to which
> K-Co defines me. I try to keep my uniqueness. I try not to come to my office during the
> weekend. For a better performance, I need to be myself. (M #10)

Marketers' identity work in the organization occurs at the negotiated equilibrium between individual and organization. This means that in the process of marketers' work identity construction, individual focus and organizational focus co-exist.

Identity incentive: Being both individually competent and organizationally prototypical. With dual foci in their identity work, the sources of marketers' identity incentive come from both individual desire and organizational desire. Table 4-2 clearly demonstrates this finding: almost all (9 out of 10) marketers mentioned that their identity incentive is both individually and organizationally aroused ("aroused by both"). Basically, as one marketer said, "Doing a good job for me simultaneously means doing a good job for K-Co." (M #6), marketers at K-Co are recognized when they are, with their marketing expertise, doing an excellent job in selling the K-Co products. I found an interesting quote from the interview with another marketer, which is:

I'm doing work for K-Co, but not for the company. (M #5)

First, I was not sure what she meant by this, so I asked the underlying meaning of the statement. She elaborated her opinion as follows:

> We marketers frequently contact with outside customers and service companies, and when interacting with them, I keep imbuing myself with the idea of what a K-Co employee should be like, such that I should do this because I work for K-Co and I shouldn't do that because I belong to K-Co. But, I always think this is *my* job. This work represents my ability and identity as a marketing expert, and I am responsible for it. I always think, through this I can learn more about marketing and accumulate my marketing knowledge. I've never thought I do this only for the company's sake. (M #5)

This quote unveils marketers' dual identity incentives: they personally seek the identity of a professionally competent marketer for their individual career development, and, simultaneously, they need to be a K-Co man who represents K-Co to the outside and works hard to contribute to the increasing sales of K-Co products. This finding about marketers at K-Co exemplifies the concept of ambivalent identification (Elsbach, 1999; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004;

Pratt, 2000), which denotes that individuals can simultaneously identify and disidentify with the organization.

Interpreting organizational identity: Both acceptance and resistance. Marketers' duality is also revealed in their interpretation of organizational identity. Marketers seem to take both positive and negative lenses when they perceive K-Co's organizational identity (10 to 7, see Table 4-2). First, as marketers of the world-class products, they are proud of the product maker—K-Co—and tend to accept and justify the unique K-Co way that has made it possible for K-Co to take the position of a leading company. For example, one marketer said:

> When I think of K-Co and K-Co people... I would say K-Co is a group of gangsters! Of course, in a positive sense. K-Co is characterized as surprisingly well-organized, systematic, extremely hardworking employees... and I feel this strong driving force from the top leaders of K-Co has made it possible for this company to end up with producing the world-best products. Think of the proverb—too many cooks spoil the stew. This is not the case of K-Co. (M #2)

Marketers' positive perspective towards the organizational identity is frequently confirmed through their continuous interactions with outsiders—non-K-Co members—which make their K-Co identity salient. This is what makes marketers differ from engineers in terms of organizational identity interpretation—engineers at K-Co are always surrounded by other K-Co engineers: "Engineers in those labs or plants just rarely meet non-K-Co people. All people we meet at the workplace are K-Co people. With no reference groups, I have no chance to feel that I'm a K-Co man" (E #1).

However, simultaneously, marketers also apply a negative lens to the K-Co way. They argue the K-Co way that has induced K-Co's business success so far may not guarantee its future success. Like engineers, marketers frequently mention the issues on fundamental organizational identity change. They argue that management's emphasis needs to shift from organizational

control to organizational leniency that encourages individuals' creativity. The very interviewee

who appreciated K-Co's strong driving force (M #2) also noted:

> K-Co tends to be obsessed by one direction. It significantly lacks diversity and creativity, which is obviously a drawback. We have been successful in overtaking, but I'm not sure if K-Co can hold this first place with the current way. K-Co urgently needs creativity and diversity! We need both old members' directionality and leadership and young members' creativity and diversity. For this, we also need voluntariness. Unless I set my subordinates a concrete assignment like "getting three creative marketing ideas by tomorrow," they never take an initiative. Change is indispensible!

Occupational Identity

Nature: Organizationally translucent occupation. The definition of marketing includes

the practices such as sales, product planning and development, pricing, promotion, and

distribution (Webster, 1992). Like engineers, marketers have a distinct occupational identity

coming from individual professional expertise and skills. As one marketer pointed out,

"Basically, marketing skill is about the process of how to explore consumers' needs, link them to

product development, commercialize, and deliver products to the consumers. This skill is

professionally constructed and can be applied to any business situation, not bound to a specific

organizational setting" (M #7). However, compared to engineering, the marketing occupation is

less organizational-boundary-free, because their occupational motivation is often aroused by the

existence of certain direct competitors: "My ideas always center on how we outsell ABC" (M

#6). Also, for marketers, which company's products they sell matters in their career as a

marketer. To illustrate:

> Seems like defining the marketing occupation is quite tricky... Marketers are proud of K-Co because K-Co's products are world best. We have a pride in the fact that we are marketing jobs for the best products. We don't want to sell the second-rate products at ABC, for example. But, marketers also have the occupational aspiration such as "I'll move to ABC and make ABC overtake K-Co!" The best I can achieve at K-Co is just to keep the already-bestselling products in first place, but if I switch to ABC and make ABC products catch up with K-Co's, then I may get promoted to the executive! Marketers can

have this mindset as well. So, even in the same situation, we can think of various mindsets marketers can have. (M #8)

In addition, as noted above, marketers' task processes necessarily contain frequent contacts with stakeholders outside K-Co—customers, outside distributors, resellers, etc.—and through direct interactions with them around various marketing issues regarding "K-Co" products, the collective identity as K-Co men is frequently primed and thus becomes salient. In the marketing department, the K-Co man identity is not ignited as saliently as in the HR department, however. As long as marketers retain individually unique marketing expertise generally usable across organizations, their occupational identity is not completely embedded in K-Co. Being less organization-identity-free [less organizationally opaque] than the engineering occupation and less organization-identity-specific [less organizationally transparent] than the HR occupation, the occupational identity of marketers may be conceptualized as *organizationally translucent*.

Internal meaning: Relatively powerful and relatively powerless. To be sure, the organization's final outcome—K-Co products—results from various functional departments' close interactions and coordination within K-Co, but this outcome is finally conveyed to the outside via marketers' actual strategic actions. Also, gathering information on outside market environments, marketers are actively involved in and have influence on product planning and development decisions within the organization. Accordingly, as a conduit between inside and outside the organization, marketers believe they hold certain power in the departmental hierarchy. One marketer put this notion as follows:

> Marketers are gatekeepers. In a sense, marketers play the role of the representative of K-Co as long as they sell the products to outside people and organizations. In the past, the basic production process was thought as "producing first and then marketing," but nowadays it's opposite, "marketing first and then producing." This means that companies need to make the products aggressively reflect customers' needs and trends.

In this situation, ideas about products from marketers who directly interact with customers are getting more important. Marketing practices are not only about product selling. They cover product planning and even strategic alliances. (M #9)

However, marketers also perceive that their power is somewhat vulnerable since the marketing department's functional value heavily depends on the organization's sales. When faced with financial difficulties or declining sales, marketing practices are prone to be considered as the earliest object of cost cutting. This attribute of the marketing occupation is illustrated in the following statement:

> Marketing absolutely depends on sales, profit and loss. Unless enough sales are guaranteed, marketing cannot survive. Sales are the raison d'être of marketing. Without increasing sales, the existence of a business unit as a whole would be threatened, and within it, the marketing department is at top priority of cutback. (M #10)

External meaning: Getting powerful with increasing employability. With their specific marketing skills, knowledge, and specialties that can be permeable to other organizational settings, marketers hold higher employability than HR people. However, for effective marketing, "Marketers are required to have a certain level of background knowledge about differentiated technological features of the specific K-Co products" (M #9), which means marketers are, to some extent, ingrained in a specific context of the organization where the products are made. This trait of marketing skills—organization-bound—may make marketers' employability less flexible than engineers', but currently marketers' employability is getting increased. Actually, recently K-Co is actively employing marketers from the external labor market, with the notion of importing "updated" marketing expertise that would be able to innovate K-Co's current marketing system. To illustrate:

> Basically, marketing activities include some specific sets of skills. Those skills can apply to any product marketing settings. In this sense, marketing is quite flexible, and marketers have a large area for using their skills. If a marketer is sure that she can do anything about marketing with 6 months of transition period allowed, any marketing jobs in any products and any industries could be the potential option she can take. In reality,

we can find many cases like this. Lately, ABC Electronics co-opted an executive marketer from P&G, and K-Co Electronics co-opted an executive from L'Oréal marketing. These cases of a radical career transition support my point. But... my case would be an exception due to the specificity of the semiconductor industry. Some marketing skills in the semiconductor business are very unique... I might not be able to sell cosmetics, that's too far... But, in general, I'm sure the marketing occupation is getting more flexible. (M #8)

Mapping Organizational Identification: Marketers in the Middle

In terms of organizational identification, people at the marketing department tend to combine what they individually desire to be and what the organization desires them to be. Significantly based on individual marketing expertise, but simultaneously ingrained in the context of the organization where the subjects of marketing are produced, the identity of the marketing occupation may be thought of as *organizationally translucent*. Under this context of occupational identity, marketers' individual identity work depends on both the individual side and the organizational side. With the salient identity as a professional marketer, marketers pursue the individual-oriented identity incentive for a competent marketer, but the organization also occupies a certain space in their identity work due to their frequent contacts to outsiders, which renders their identity as a K-Co man salient and meaningful. K-Co's organizational identity has significant influence on marketers' work identity construction processes, which resemble HR staff's identity work, but its effect is buffered by another salient orientation of identity work, which is individuality—the primary focus in engineers' identity work. In all, in marketers' identity work, individual identity and organizational identity are simultaneously salient, which locates marketers in the *middle*—between core and periphery—of the organizational identification map: they identify with the organization less than HR people do, but more than engineers do.

145

Within-variation: Individually hooked marketers. Within the group of marketers, there

is variation in organizational identification coming from the subgroup of "experienced workers,"

who have previous work experience before joining K-Co[14]. A notable difference between

experienced marketers and internally nurtured marketers comes from the significance of

organizational identity in their identity work. For instance, a marketer having worked for a

company other than K-Co said: "I can't understand the notion diffused among the K-Co people

that there's no alternative. It seems that they think moving to another company means moving to

a worse company, even though there are plenty of outside opportunities to work in better

environments, fully displaying one's abilities as a brand manager. Sticking to the name value of

K-Co, they can't imagine detaching themselves from K-Co. That's pathetic!" (M #1) This quote

implies that for the experienced marketers, their occupational identity is likely to be defined as

saliently organizational-boundary-free. For them, what is primarily important is *what* they do in

order to become a competent marketer having professional marketing knowledge, and *where*

they work is of secondary importance in their career decisions. One marketer who has prior

work experiences in two companies before joining K-Co illustrated experienced marketers'

organizational-boundary-free identity work as follows:

> Of course, I have the mind of belongingness to the organization I work for. But that
> mind is not necessarily bound to K-Co. When I was working at Oracle, I thought Oracle
> was the best, and when I was working at SAP, I thought SAP was the best. I identified
> with those companies, as long as I could realize my individual occupational aspiration
> there. If I've changed my identity since I entered K-Co, that's not because K-Co imposes
> me to change, but because I feel I need to change in order to do my work effectively in
> this organization. (M #3)

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[14] There also is this group of experienced workers in the engineering department, but, according to my data analysis, in the case of engineers, differences in organizational identification between people having no past work experience and people having past work experience are not as clear as those among marketers. For engineers, the variation in organizational identification due to the differences in the level of technology and differential organizational support is much more salient.

As long as marketers' occupational achievement is affected by the product's quality and brand value, which heavily depends on the producing organization, where they work is as important as what they do in marketers' identity work. However, in the case of experienced marketers, their focus of identity work is skewed to their individual uniqueness. For them, individual identity and organizational identity are no longer simultaneously salient, because their occupational identity is characterized more organizationally opaque rather than organizationally translucent. They are flexible with the organizational boundary: to the new workplace, they bring their work identity constructed in the process of executing their individual marketing skills in the previous workplace (Beyer & Hannah, 2002) and, whenever available, they are likely to hop to another organization which seems to provide more resources for developing their individual career as a marketer, such as better marketing resources and opportunities, promising products, or better monetary rewards. Thus, these experienced marketers *hooked* by their individualities—individual marketing expertise—are located in the organizational identification map more distant from the core than other marketers internally nurtured at K-Co. The more peripheral state of organizational identification for experienced marketers is illustrated by the following quote from an interviewee who has work experiences in three organizations before joining K-Co:

> I think my key contributions are effectively advertising this organization's brand values and technological capacities to the outside and, above all, through working with me, making people at K-Co learn what I've learned from my previous marketing experiences in the US. And, the organization to which I can contribute this way just happens to be K-Co. K-Co is just one possible playground where I can make contributions and realize my career aspiration, and I'm always ready to move to another place if there's another marketing opportunity for contributions. I think I was selected by K-Co just for its instrumental needs for my specific occupational skills. My role in this organization is only supplementary. I'm supposed to help K-Co people here already deeply rooted in K-Co additionally grow and develop. This way, I cannot be a typical K-Co man, and they may not think I, who came from outside, can be a K-Co man. They cannot be like me

147

and I cannot be like them. Of course, here I work hard and do my best, but the attitude of "K-Co is everything to me" they may have in their minds does not apply to me. (M #10)

Figure 4-4 shows the middle position of marketers in the core-periphery map of organizational identification. Within-variation is depicted with the arrow.

GENERAL VARIATION IN THE CORE-PERIPHERY MAP OF ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION: TENURE AS MAGNETISM TO THE ORGANIZATIONAL CORE

So far, I have drawn the core-periphery map of organizational identification, considering different occupational identities across three functional departments within K-Co. However, data analysis based on interviews also shows that one's organizational tenure blurs this core-periphery map: as employees' ranks get higher, they universally become more deeply identified with the organization, regardless of the occupation they hold. In other words, organizational tenure functions as *magnetism* to the core of the organizational identification map. This is because the longer one remains within K-Co, the more organizationally anchored one's occupational identity becomes, which in turn leads individuals' identity focus and incentive to be more and more organization-oriented. Below, I describe how each occupation's identity becomes organizationally transparent with increasing organizational tenure—the HR occupation is always organizationally transparent, the engineering occupation radically becomes more organizationally transparent, and the marketing occupation gradually becomes organizationally transparent—and how it affects each occupation incumbent's organizational identification. For this discussion of tenure's effect on employees' identity work, I re-organized what was presented in Table 4-2—the counts of how many times the theoretical categories appeared by department—by dividing my sample into two groups according to the tenure length. Table 4-4 shows the results: the counts of how many times the theoretical categories appeared, by

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department *and* by tenure. In the following sections, I explain the underlying meanings of these

counts as well.

TABLE 4-4
Tenure's Magnetism: Counts of Theoretical Categories by Department and Tenure

Theoretical Categories	HR		Engineering		Marketing	
	Short tenure (N=6)	Long tenure (N=10)	Short tenure (N=10)	Long tenure (N=13)	Short tenure (N=5)	Long tenure (N=5)
Focus of identity work:						
Organization-focused	5 (83%)	10 (100%)	2 (20%)	8 (62%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
Both-focused	2 (33%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	7 (54%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
Individual-focused	2 (33%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	10 (77%)	5 (100%)	2 (40%)
Identity incentive:						
Organizationally aroused	4 (67%)	10 (100%)	1 (10%)	7 (54%)	0 (0%)	4 (80%)
Aroused by both	1 (17%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	6 (46%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)
Individually aroused	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	8 (80%)	7 (54%)	4 (80%)	0 (0%)
Interpreting organizational identity:						
Acceptance	6 (100%)	10 (100%)	2 (20%)	9 (69%)	5 (100%)	5 (100%)
Resistance	1 (17%)	3 (30%)	8 (80%)	10 (77%)	5 (100%)	2 (40%)

Notes:

1. The numbers of the interviewees who mentioned a particular theoretical category are reported. In the interview, each interviewee can fall into any of theoretical categories within a conceptual dimension, and thus the counts of theoretical categories in a particular conceptual dimension do not add up to the total number of interviewees.

2. For HR staff, if one's rank is or is higher than a "manager," I classified this person as having a long tenure. Mostly, HR people with 7~8 years of tenure get promoted to this position. From the manager position, people are supposed to manage their own team as a leader. As for marketers, in my interviewee pool, there was no marketer whose rank is lower than a "manager." Instead, I had 5 experienced marketers whose tenures are all shorter than 6 years. Their ranks are all a "manager" or higher, but I classified this group of marketers as having a short tenure in my analysis. For engineers, if one's rank is or is higher than a "senior engineer," I classified this person as having a long tenure. Engineers with 7~8 years of tenure get promoted to this position. Like the manager position of HR, from the senior engineer position, engineers are supposed to manage their own team as a leader. There was also a group of "experienced engineers." For this group of engineers, as I did for marketers, I only considered their absolute length of tenure, regardless of their current ranks.

149

HR Occupation

By nature, HR occupational identity is defined as deeply ingrained in the specific organizational context, thereby organizationally transparent, and thus tenure's magnetizing to the core of organizational identification map is not that prominent. The counts presented in Table 4-4 bolster this. By and large, for both HR people with short tenure and with long tenure, identity focus and incentive tend to be organization-oriented. People with a long tenure show a very strong organizational orientation (100% of them do), but those with a short tenure still show quite a strong organizational orientation. The counts also demonstrate that with respect to organizational identity interpretation, all HR people, regardless of tenure, take a positive lens. As long as "HR occupation or career is essentially hard to be defined without the specific organization" (H #11), HR people's level of organizational identification, which is high, is expected to be quite standardized across all ranks, and the counts support it. The following quotes from the HR staff with various tenures also exemplify their standardized identity work:

> I can have more self-esteem based on the fact that I belong to this organization having the leading company image. (H #8; 5 years of tenure)

> I always try to keep in mind K-Co's core values and philosophy, and actually these concepts are directly applied to my work. I feel I'm always saying something cool about K-Co. I'm brainwashing myself this way, maybe. (H #9; 9 years of tenure)

> I'm not saying I'm lack of personal uniqueness. I rather say I have quite a strong personality. However, many times I find myself keeping talking about the organization unwittingly from the organization's perspective, as if that's me. (H #11; 14 years of tenure)

> I've heard quite frequently that I'm a religious fanatic to K-Co-ism. (H #15; 23 years of tenure)

150

Engineering Occupation

At K-Co, engineers' career path goes through a critical and radical stage: from an engineer to a manager. At this stage, their occupational identity radically becomes organizationally transparent, and the organization requires engineers to minimize their individual orientation, replacing it with an organizational orientation. Engineers are officially entitled "PL (Project Manager)" on whom certain organizational responsibilities are conferred, and their salient work identity is expected to be changed from an engineer—individual-oriented—to a manager—organization-oriented. Once titled PL, engineers' occupational identity is no more allowed to remain only at the individual side, but required to encompass the organizational side. With upward mobility within K-Co, engineers need to represent the interest of the organization more than their individual occupational interest (Allen & Katz, 1986; Goldner & Ritti, 1967; Kornhauser, 1962). That is, *where* they work becomes as important as *what* they do. As one engineer mentioned:

> There is a critical point where engineers transform into managers. Managers are supposed to work primarily for K-Co, which is not true for the engineers under that level who are motivated to work hard because they individually feel it's interesting. With increasing responsibilities and subordinates one should care about, people seem to put almost everything they have for the organization. K-Co also prefers that type of employees for managerial positions. (E #6; 9 years of tenure)

This need for organizational identification for engineers in manager positions is not just internally imposed but also externally imposed. As they are frequently required to consider and make decisions from the organizational side in the process of work, their occupational identity gets more and more organizationally transparent, and this results in managers' decreasing external employability. Interestingly, one engineer noted:

> There is a saying that, over the age of 35, engineers can't change one's company. Under 35, engineers hold flexible career mobility and the labor markets need their skills, but for engineers over 35, this market window is no more open. For them, there is no choice but

151

putting all in the current organization. In general, the age of 35 means the career stage where engineers move into the manager position. (E #17; 8 years of tenure)

This transforming stage in engineers' career path forces their identity focus and incentive to move to the organizational orientation, thus resulting in high level of organizational identification among engineers in high ranks. For example, one engineer with 22 years of tenure said, "For me, K-Co is just my family. If someone insults K-Co, I can't stand it!" (E #5) Another engineer with 24 years of tenure mentioned, "My wife often tells me that I just look addicted to K-Co-ism" (E #11).

The counts in Table 4-4 also support these characteristics of the engineers magnetized to the organizational core with their increasing organizational tenure. For the engineers with long tenure, their identity focus does not necessarily seem to be organization-focused: 8 engineers (62%) mentioned the organization-focus vs. 10 engineers (77%) mentioned the individual-focus. However, when compared with the engineers with a short tenure, even though individualities commonly matter for both groups (70% of short-tenure engineers vs. 77% of long-tenure engineers), a much greater percentage of the long-tenure engineers described their focus on the organization in identity work (20% of short-tenure engineers vs. 62% of long-tenure engineers). This pattern holds with regard to identity incentive: only 10% of the short-tenure engineers said their identity work is aroused by the organization, whereas 54% of the long-tenure engineers mentioned their identity work is aroused by the organization. Also, notably, a quite lesser percentage of the long-tenure engineers (54%) mentioned their individually aroused identity incentive than did short-tenure engineers (80%).

These findings could be interpreted as follows. Basically, in engineers' identity work, regardless of tenure, their individualities expressed through their unique professional skills and expertise continuously matter as an important identity focus. However, with increasing tenure

and their required role as a manager, engineers get to more seriously perceive their organizational membership and the organization wherein their job and work responsibilities are defined. This increasingly motivates them to think of their identity as a K-Co man, thus incorporating the prototypicality of that employee identity into their identity work, relatively diminishing their individually aroused identity incentive—becoming a competent engineer. All in all, in the long-tenure engineers' identity work, essential self-identity or self-esteem as an engineer still matters, but in the real processes of work, as a manager of K-Co, they are motivated to work for themselves *and* increasingly for K-Co, which finally leads them to strong identification with the organization.

Finally, with regard to organizational identity interpretation, most engineers are likely to take a negative lens, but, interestingly, a large portion of the long-tenure engineers (69%) mentioned positive aspects of K-Co as well, whereas only a small portion of the short-tenure engineers (20%) did. This finding may imply that although many engineers are criticizing the current K-Co way that restricts employees' creativity and perceiving the need for change, the long-tenure engineers, based on their real experiences of leading and managing people, appreciate positive aspects of or justify the current K-Co system. They, at the organizational core, may realize how challenging it is to actually change the culture of such a large organization as K-Co.

Marketing Occupation

For marketers, with increasing tenure, their occupational identity is gradually ingrained into the organizational identity, that is, steadily becoming more organizationally transparent. Accumulation of marketing know-how and experiences as an organization's representative to the outside lead marketers to become more a specific "K-Co" marketer than a marketer in general.

In the course of executing marketing practices at the organizational border between inside and outside, they frequently represent K-Co, and thus with increasing tenure, their occupational identity is getting more and more dyed by the K-Co color and identity, finally facilitating their strong identification with K-Co. The following two quotes from the interviews with marketers with a long tenure illustrate how accumulated tenure functions as magnetism to the core of the organizational identification map.

> The main reason I feel I'm a K-Co man comes from the accumulation of time I've spent here at K-Co. Now almost all my occupational concerns are related to this company. Every moment at the workplace, I'm concerned about how to maximize the performance of my business unit. Better business unit performance will lead to better company performance, finally leading to my salary raise. So, I cannot help thinking my company and I are closely connected, eventually. I have both positive and negative feelings towards my company, but all of these feelings and experiences have led me to strongly feel I'm a K-Co man. (M #8; 17 years of tenure)

> K-Co has provided me many opportunities. With the accumulation of experience as a spokesman of K-Co, I came to know a lot of people and get a wide scope of view on marketing. I think K-Co has confirmed its brand value through my role, but simultaneously my own brand as a marketer has risen thanks to K-Co. These days, with outsiders' high brand recognition of K-Co, marketers of other companies frequently initiate business meetings with me, and in these moments I feel so proud that I'm a member of K-Co. (M #7; 20 years of tenure)

These traits of marketers' identity work regarding organizational tenure are also proved by the counts. As reported in Table 4-4, compared to the other two occupational groups, people at the marketing department do not show extreme patterns. Overall, in terms of both identity focus and incentive, marketers with long tenure tend to be organization-oriented, while those with short tenure tend to be individual-oriented. However, simultaneously, a large portion of marketers shows a "both" orientation. This pattern indicates that with increasing organizational tenure, marketers' identity work gradually moves from the individual orientation to the organizational orientation, finally magnetizing them to the core of the organizational identification map.

Figure 4-5 summarizes the core-periphery map of organizational identification and its variations. Figure 4-5 (a) shows the overall pattern and within-variations of the organizational identification map. In general, K-Co's organizational identity, described as the black color, has a significant effect on HR staff at the core, but this effect becomes weaker to marketers, and even much weaker to engineers at the periphery. Also, there are two types of within-variations: some organizationally hooked engineers move towards the core, and some individually hooked marketers move towards the periphery. Figure 4-5 (b) depicts how the organizational identification map changes when organizational tenure is considered: for all occupation incumbents, the longer their tenure gets, the more deeply they are dyed by the K-Co color, thus magnetized to the organizational core. This magnetism blurs the core-periphery pattern of organizational identification, leaving only the core.

FIGURE 4-5

Core-Periphery Map of Organizational Identification:
Overall Pattern and Variations
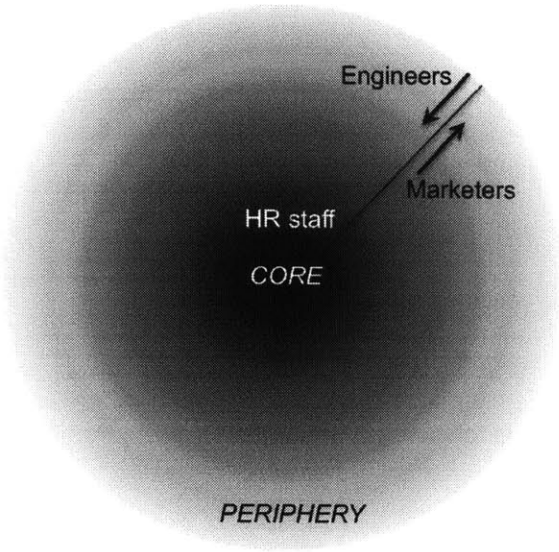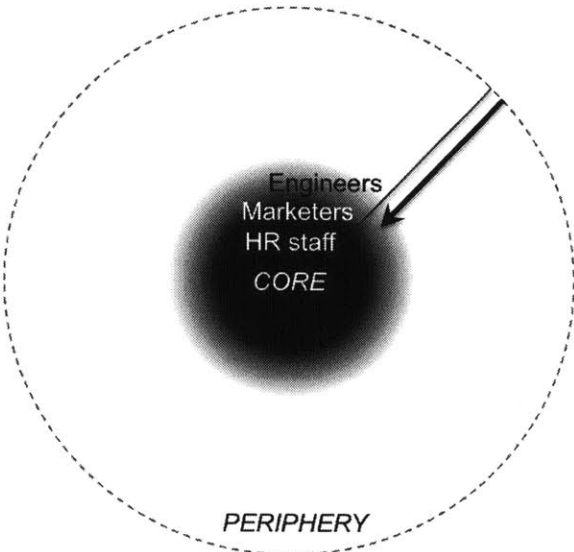
(a) Overall pattern and within-variations   (b) General variation by tenure

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I theoretically elaborated the organizational identification literature by examining the horizontal variation of organizational identification within an organizational setting of K-Co. Through inductive data analysis based on 49 interviews with current K-Co employees, a salient influence of occupation on employees' identity work—how occupational identity moderates the identity alignment process between individual and organization—has emerged. I found that even within a strong cultural context of K-Co, where the organizational identity is likely to be ubiquitously salient, thus heavily affecting individuals' identity formation process at work, there exists a variation in employees' organizational identification depending on which department they belong to, that is, which occupation one is engaged in. Based on this finding, I draw a core-periphery map of organizational identification within an organization that conceptualizes its horizontal, that is, occupational variation.

More specifically, I found that occupational identities of the three key departments within K-Co (HR, Engineering, and Marketing departments) can be conceptualized in terms of organization-identity-transparency, and the degree of this transparency significantly affects how salient and strong the occupation holder's organizational identification is. HR staff's occupational identity, as transmitter of organizational core values and management philosophy, is deeply embedded in the specific organizational context [organizationally transparent occupation], so they strongly enact a prototypical K-Co man identity, which locates them at the core of the organizational identification map. In contrast, engineers are located at the periphery of the organizational identification map because of their weak identity work as a K-Co man. Engineers' weak organizational identification is attributable to their occupational identity that is heavily based on their individually unique technical specialties, not necessarily bound to K-Co's

157

specific organizational context and transferrable to other organizations [organizationally opaque occupation]. Finally, marketers are located in the middle area of the organizational identification map with their weaker organizational identification than HR staff's but stronger than engineers'. This trait of marketers' identity work comes from their occupational identity that is not only based on marketers' individualities such as specific marketing expertise applicable to any organization, but also significantly ingrained in the specific organization due to their occupational role as the conduit between K-Co products and outside [organizationally translucent occupation]. Data analysis also shows that one's organizational tenure blurs this core-periphery map of organizational identification based on occupational differences: with increasing tenure, employees are, regardless of their occupation, magnetized to the organizational core, thus showing universally strong organizational identification. Below, I discuss underlying theoretical implications of these empirical findings by actively applying core-periphery theory.

Core-Periphery Dynamics of Identities

The core-periphery framework has been used in a variety of fields in social sciences such as the world system (Wallerstein, 1974), industrial and occupational segmentation (Beck, Horan, & Tolbert, 1978; Bibb & Form, 1977), organization theory (Thompson, 1967), networks (Borgatti & Everett, 2000), and employment flexibility (Cappelli & Neumark, 2004; Kalleberg, 2001; Osterman, 1988). Though applied to explicating myriads of social phenomena, the main idea of this framework converges on the unequal distribution of power and resources between core and periphery: crucial resources concentrate in and are protected by the powerful core sectors, and the actors in the peripheral sectors are disadvantaged in obtaining power and resources, which makes them vulnerable and easily replaceable. In this section, I apply the core-

periphery framework in interpreting individuals' identity work (organizational identification) that is closely associated with the power distribution among the departments (occupational groups) within an organization that retains a strong culture.

HR at the core. A strong organizational culture is based on a widely shared and intensely held system of values and norms that defines appropriate attitudes and behaviors for organizational members (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; O'Reilly, 1989; O'Reilly et al., 1991). As a social control, a strong organizational culture affects members' sensemaking of their organizational life, manages employee identity and identification, increases behavioral consistency among employees, and finally enhances execution of organizational routines and organizational performances (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Kunda, 1992). Therefore, in a strong cultural context, the system of espoused values and norms is the "core" organizational resource, and who holds the right to set and distribute that system heavily affects the power structure within an organization. At K-Co, many employees perceive that the HR department holds this power. These many employees include not only HR people themselves but also the people in other departments within K-Co[15]. See the following quotes:

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[15] Sometimes the HR department's power is negatively perceived, but there still is the notion that HR holds the power. To illustrate:

> The main point of organizational change should be about the powerful position of HR. Traditionally HR has had power and strongly controlled other employees. I admit that this has enabled K-Co to minimize many side effects that every large organization may have, but I'm not sure this strong control system by HR would continuously work in the future. In order to achieve a true creativity-based system, HR should take the initiative for change, actively introducing new innovative institutions and renew the organizational culture. But they never change themselves. Seems like they have the perception that they compose a kind of prestigious circle that no one else can get in. No rotation there, and no experienced workers entering there. They are still far from change. (M #5)

Certainly I feel K-Co's management tends to center on the staff. HR people's job is not just mechanically arranging employees' HR document files. Their main job includes how to deploy appropriate people to appropriate positions to maximize organizational performance. HR needs to not just select and deploy people, but to select and deploy the "right" people. For doing this, they should have certain criteria for these right people. They may need to define something like organizationally desired employee attributes or qualifications and manage employees' internal careers to make them finally contribute to organizational goals. In this sense, I guess they may think like they belong to the core of K-Co. (M #7)

HR's main power may come from the fact that they are in charge of performance appraisal, which is a very crucial issue at work. People in other departments always need to discuss with HR about performance appraisal because all these issues are closely related to organization management that HR is mainly engaged in. I can suggest something to HR, but final actions are executed by them. Also, HR is responsible for organizational culture and training/education. They make various HR policies and implicitly or explicitly force us to follow them. Seems like through all these activities, they reveal their strong connection to the company and try to keep their power. (E #2)

At K-Co, HR tools are regarded not as just administrative tools but as a significant way to keep and convey the core values and norms projected on K-Co's management philosophy and top managers' decisions. This powerful position of the HR department at K-Co is contrasted to the traditional image of HR people who have a relatively weak position due to their marginality in management decision-making processes and lack of clarity in specifying goals and business outcomes (Freidson, 1994; Hunt & Boxall, 1998). At K-Co, embedded in its strong organizational culture, the HR department is considered as holding the "core" position in the organization, and thus HR people are highly committed to their occupation (simultaneously their organization): "Once HR, forever HR!" (H #11) That is, this organizationally transparent occupation of HR naturally requires HR people to actively enact the organizationally espoused employee identity—K-Co man—at the core of the organizational identification map. In a sense, the HR staff at K-Co resemble the "core" workforce in the core-periphery model of labor flexibility (Cappelli & Neumark, 2004; Kalleberg, 2001)—the regular and permanent workers highly bound to the organization.

Engineering at the periphery. On the contrary, engineers at K-Co look more like a

"peripheral" workforce in that model—workers whose peripheral employment status is

institutionalized on a contingent and contract basis (Cappelli & Neumark, 2004). Actually,

depending on business strategies and economic situations, K-Co has sensitive needs for specific

engineering skills, which implies that the labor demand for engineers is apt to be flexible: "At K-

Co, engineers tend to be regarded as the workforce easily substitutable or buyable whenever the

organization needs" (E #23). Engineers could be perceived as executing the "core" task—

product development—that is physically and more directly related to organizational performance

("We actually call the engineering department a "direct" department since we make real products

and money for the company, whereas HR and others are called "indirect" departments" (E

#16).), but they often lose their authority and autonomy in performing their professional tasks,

constrained by the bureaucratic organizational structure (Derber, 1983; Freidson, 1984).

Likewise, at K-Co, engineers are likely to become subordinate to the organizational "core"

authority's salient normative control. This locates their occupational status at the periphery of

the organization, which accounts for engineers' low organizational identification. For engineers,

the influence of the overarching organizational culture on K-Co employees' identity work,

though it is supposed to be strong, rather tends to be weak. This weakness in engineers'

identification with the organization is even more reinforced with their high external

employability (Bridges & Villemez, 1991; Kalleberg & Berg, 1987), leading their identification

focus to center on where their individualities are manifested, which is their organizationally

opaque occupation. In their peripheral place on the organizational identification map, engineers

construct the enclaves of a subculture based on their occupational values that cut across

organizational boundaries, which are often counter to the core/strong organizational culture

(Bloor & Dawson, 1994; Boisnier & Chatman, 2003; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Marketing at the middle (semi-periphery). Marketers are located at the middle of the organizational identification map. In Wallerstein's (1974) term, they could be classified as having the "semi-periphery" position—dominated by the core but dominating the periphery. In the strong cultural context of K-Co, marketers are under the influence of sturdy organizational control through the espoused organizational values, norms, and philosophy enacted and enforced by the core department—HR department—and subject to their power of transmitting and distributing those spiritual resources. Accepting the influence of core values and norms is occupationally important for marketers, because they connect the firm with its customers and with other firms (Johnston & Lawrence, 1988) playing the role of the representative of K-Co at the moment of transaction. However, simultaneously, marketers exercise their influence on the other occupational group—the engineering department at the periphery. With the logic of "marketing first, and then producing" (M #9), marketers have substantial influence on the process of product planning, design, and development based on information gathered through interacting with outside market agents—customers (Webster, 1992). Accordingly, both influenced and influencing, marketers are located at the middle, that is, the semi-periphery in the organization. At the middle, marketers are influenced by the organizational core with their occupational role of the "gatekeeper" (M #9) between inside and outside of the organization, and thus they need to make their focus of identity work centered on the organization. Also, they influence the organizational periphery based on their individual marketing insight and expertise accumulated through their boundary-spanning marketing activities, which protrudes their individual values and identity as a marketer, leading marketers' identity work to be focused on

their individualities. The organizationally translucent identity of their occupation—bound to both organization and individual—locates marketers at the middle of the organizational identification map, and they identify with the organization less than the people at the core, but more than the people at the periphery.

Variation in Variation

As emphasized above, even within the strong cultural context, the horizontal variation in organizational identification depending on occupation—the core-periphery map of organizational identification—could be identified. This indicates that individual employees at K-Co are still active agents in constructing their identity at work even under the influence of strong organizational agency. Within the horizontal variation pattern in employees' organizational identification, however, I could find further variation. Below, I even more elaborate the core-periphery map of organizational identification by discussing this variation in variation. I identify two hooking mechanisms that induce the variation in variation.

Individual hook to periphery. Among marketers, whether one has prior work experience before joining K-Co or not leads to the additional variation in one's identification with the organization. In the organizational identification map, marketers are at the middle, but in the case of experienced marketers, with more flexible career mobility, their identity focus tends to be pulled to the periphery. Experienced marketers put more emphasis on individual characteristics reflected in their skills and expertise in their identity work (Beyer & Hannah, 2002), and thus who they are as a marketer has a more significant meaning than who they are as a K-Co man. This individual-skewed identity focus hooks them to the organizational periphery, resulting in experienced marketers' lower organizational identification than other original K-Co marketers'.

With their individual engineering skills and specialties, engineers' career paths are also likely to be boundaryless (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) like marketers', and there actually is a group of "experienced engineers." However, in experienced engineers' identity work at K-Co, this hook to the periphery does not have as salient a meaning as in experienced marketers' identity work. Since all engineers, whether they have previous work experiences or not, are already located at the periphery of the organizational identification map, the individual hook to the periphery due to the notion of flexible career mobility does not have a significant additional effect on their identity work.

Organizational hook to core. Another hooking mechanism in the organizational identification map is triggered by the organization. The first type of organizational hook to the core is applied to the case of engineers in key business units within K-Co. In general, engineers are located at the periphery. However, when their specific technical skills and expertise are especially acknowledged by the organization as containing significant competence for high organizational performance, engineers' individual occupational goal gets aligned with and embedded in the organizational goal (Bartol, 1979; Lachman & Aranya, 1986), which leads their focus of identity work to be pulled to the organizational core.

The second type of organizational hook to the core is induced by tenure, and this pulling mechanism occurs regardless of whether one is a HR staff, an engineer, or a marketer. As employees climb the internal career ladder, with accumulated experiences and interactions within the organization, they become more and more organizationally prototypical, becoming "organization men" (Whyte, 1956). Through this process, employees' occupational identity universally converges to the organizational core, thus becoming organizationally transparent, and finally leads to employees' deep identification with the organization. Alternatively, tenure may

164

filter out the employees not fitting the K-Co man identity, leaving only prototypical K-Co men at the top of the organization. Through either mechanism, tenure hooks employees to the core of the organizational identification map, and this hooking mechanism facilitates "homosocial reproduction" (Kanter, 1977) that produces the homogeneous managerial enclaves at the core of the organization.

Limitations and Future Research

Though this study has revealed theoretical insights on identity and identification, its findings need to be interpreted in the context of this study's limitations. First, I discussed the variation in organizational identification as mainly depending on situational or structural attributes—the occupational identity one holds. However, more micro individual-level variables such as an individual's disposition and self-concept orientation may also have certain influence on one's predilection to identify with an organization (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Actually, in the interview with an engineer, he said, "People with the individual-oriented *propensity* tend to become engineers. Those types of individualistic people study engineering and work as an engineer. They tend to primarily focus on individual tasks, not caring much about what the organization or whatever does" (E #18). Future studies thus might elaborate more the organizational identification literature by exploring how individuals' dispositional variables essentially affect the variation of organizational identification. By doing so, the answer to the following question could be found: does horizontal variation of organizational identification occur because the occupation significantly shapes individuals' identity work or because individuals with the predilection to identify (or disidentify) with an organization choose the occupation? Or both?

165

Second, this study's argument may hold only in a certain type of organization. Basically, the core-periphery notion assumes a bureaucratic or hierarchical organizational structure. However, currently bureaucratic employment relations are disintegrating and post-bureaucratic organizations such as virtual organizations or network organizations are emerging (Barley & Kunda, 2001; Kalleberg, 2003; Powell, 1990). In these structurally different settings, the core-periphery logic of organizational identification discussed in this study might not work. Accordingly, future research could broaden the discussion of the variation of organizational identification by taking the changing business needs and the emerging patterns of organizing work into consideration. In different structures of organizations, organizational identity might no longer be a strong input into individuals' identity work.

CONCLUSION

This chapter attempted to enrich theory on organizational identification by casting doubt on the implicit assumption of the "organization as a whole." In addition to the previous efforts of identifying the vertical variation of organizational identification—multiple levels of identification within an organizational umbrella—this study addresses variation with a horizontal perspective. A grounded theory approach to the qualitative data collected in K-Co that holds a strong culture showed that occupation is a significant variable that affects employees' dynamic alignment processes between individual identity and organizational identity. Even within the context of a strong organizational culture, what one does—occupation—as well as where one works—organization—is a significant input in an individual's work identity construction processes, and thus how deeply embedded one's occupation is in the organizational context determines one's level of organizational identification. Based on a balanced emphasis on both

situational variables—organization and occupation—that heavily affect an individual's identity work, this study identified the core-periphery map of organizational identification that conceptualizes horizontal variation in employees' organizational identification. The findings of this chapter further address the necessity of a more integrative approach towards the identity and identification issues in organization science by taking a balanced perspective between organizational psychology (organization-oriented) and organizational sociology (occupation-oriented).

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The relationship between individuals and organizations has been a fundamental issue in organization science. In this dissertation, I delved into this issue with the lens of identity and identification—how people align their individual identities with the identity of the organizations they belong to. Using an empirical case of a large global Korean company that, with its strong organizational culture, holds a clear notion of the espoused employee identity, so called "K-Co man," I unraveled the dynamic processes by which employees' identities are constructed at work. I followed a chronological order of one's employment stages—selection stage, training stage, and work stage—to analyze employees' identity work. Specifically, in chapter 2, how the K-Co man identity is initially reified through the selection process was examined, and in chapter 3, using the data of K-Co's newcomer training program, I analyzed how the organization institutionally imposes the K-Co man identity on individuals and through which process individuals' organizational identification is attained in this early socialization stage. Finally, in chapter 4, I identified how the current K-Co employees' organizational identification varies in the workplace. I looked at the three key departments in K-Co (HR, Engineering, and Marketing departments) and how the occupation that departmental members hold induces the variation in their identity work as a K-Co man.

THE DYNAMICS OF EMPLOYEES' IDENTITY WORK

Overall, this study's empirical findings concerning the dynamics of K-Co employees' identity work revealed that individualities matter even within a strong organizational context. In other words, at K-Co, wherein what a K-Co man should be like is clearly constituted under the strong and significant influence of organizationally espoused values and norms, there is significant room for individual agency in the dynamic interplay between the organization and

169

individuals regarding identity work. Individuals are not always passive recipients of the organization's inputs and influences. Further, by investigating three employment stages together, this study unveiled the time-sensitive nature of employees' identity work. I found that depending on which employment stage employees are in, the manifestation of individual agency in their identity work dynamically varies. Below, I discuss how organizational agency and individual agency become interchangeably salient in employees' identity work at different employment stages.

At the Selection

As for selection, interviews with selection staff revealed that K-Co's selection process is organized with a distinct purpose: seeking a good identity fit between the applicant, a potential K-Co man, and the organizationally espoused K-Co man. I also found substantial consistency between the attributes of the prototypical K-Co man identity as current individual K-Co employees perceive them and those of the espoused K-Co man identity that selection staff members seek. This substantial consistency between current individual employees' perceptions and the organization's intention means that K-Co's intention to choose the right people in terms of an identity fit is effectively achieved at the point of organizational entry. This also indicates that the dynamics of identity work are primarily dominated by organizational agency at the selection stage. In this stage of choosing potential K-Co men, organizational agency prevails over individual agency in their interplay.

Although I found organizational agency dominant at selection, this study's data on selection covered only the organizational side—how the espoused K-Co man identity is projected on the selection process by the organization—and thus in the present study how individual agency works at organizational entry could not be identified with empirical evidence.

In fact, this study's main interest is the identity work of "K-Co employees," so the identity actions of individual applicants to K-Co, who are not yet "K-Co employees," are not included in this study's research framework. However, albeit empirical evidence is not presented in the present study, previous studies have provided some support for individual agency at the point of organizational entry. Basically, those studies showed that individuals play an active role in gathering information about the culture and identity of the organization they are applying to (Ashford & Black, 1996; Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Cable & Judge, 1996). Empirical evidence has also supported that applicants' reactions towards the recruiting organizations and their final organization choices are predicted by how congruent applicants' individual identity and their perceptions of the organizational identity are (Cable & Judge, 1996; Dineen, Ash, & Noe, 2002; Herriot, 2004; Turban & Keon, 1993). It is because people seek a job in an organization that is considered to espouse specific values with which they can express parts of their self-concept (Highhouse et al., 2007) or applicants' perception of identity fit formed during the selection process, between themselves and interviewers who may represent or signal the values and behavioral norms typical of the organization, finally affects their organization choices (Connerley & Rynes, 1997; Herriot, 2002). These empirical findings hint that at the point of entry to K-Co, applicants' individual agency regarding identity work would be distinctively expressed. The salient identity of K-Co and K-Co man is clearly manifested in K-Co's selection practices, and thus, going through K-Co's selection process, applicants will form a clear perception of and identity reactions to the organization. There might be many other issues involved in their final organization choices, but in the case of K-Co, with its strong organizational identity, applicants would make decisions significantly based on their perception of identity fit between themselves and K-Co.

Yet, again, as the current data about selection are only about the organizational side, it is empirically unavailable to get the final conclusion about the role of individual agency at K-Co's selection stage. Based on the empirical findings and this study's scope that mainly covers the dynamics of employees' identity work "as a K-Co man," it could be concluded that at the selection stage, organizational agency plays a more significant role over individual agency.

At the Training

K-Co has a 4-week newcomer training program that all newcomers must go through before they start work. My interviews with trainers, the agents of the organization, showed that during the training period K-Co intends to divest newcomers' incoming identities and impose the espoused K-Co man identity on them, thereby imbuing trainees' organizational identification. Specifically, K-Co uses institutionalized socialization tactics, and mentor and team are two important socialization agents for igniting trainees' identification with K-Co. However, empirical evidence regarding individual trainees' reaction to this organizational intention revealed that there is room for individual agency even within the strong institutionalized socialization context of K-Co: trainees' organizational identification is attained mainly through their identification with the mentor, but, team identification, which the organization expected to also contribute to boosting trainees' organizational identification, does not work as the organization intends. These findings indicate that even at the early socialization process in a strong organizational culture wherein organizational agency dominates at the interplay between organization and individuals, individual agency still matters. In the process towards organizational identification, the organization's intention is only partially realized, because trainees hold their individual agency in identity work, not always reacting to socialization agents as the organization predicts.

At the Workplace

Individual agency continuously matters after the training stage. At the real workplaces of K-Co, I found that the identity of the occupation each individual holds has salient influence on one's identity work. Within the strong cultural context of K-Co, where the organization identity is expected to be ubiquitously salient, individual employees' occupation induces a significant variation in employees' organizational identification. Put differently, which department within K-Co one belongs to, that is, which occupation one is engaged in, moderates employees' identity alignment process between individual and organization. For HR staff, keepers and transmitters of K-Co's strong organizational values, norms, and behavioral ideals, their occupational identity is deeply embedded in the specific organizational context of K-Co. Hence, organizational influence on their identity work is salient and dominant, stimulating their identity incentive to be a prototypical K-Co man, which implies that individual agency may not much matter in HR people's identity work. However, for engineers whose occupational identity is not necessarily ingrained in K-Co but rather defined significantly based on individual unique technical expertise, although their everyday organizational life is situated in K-Co's specific and strong organizational context, individual agency saliently matters in their identity work. Engineers' organizational identification, in general, is low and their identity incentive centers on being a competent engineer, not being a prototypical K-Co man. In marketers' identity work, both individual agency and organizational agency play a salient role. Their occupational identity is based both on their individual marketing expertise and on their organizational role as the conduit between K-Co products and outside. Thus, though not as saliently as in engineers', in marketers' identity work, individual agency matters. After all, I found that even in the real workplaces where K-Co's strong organizational culture prevails, some K-Co employees hold their own
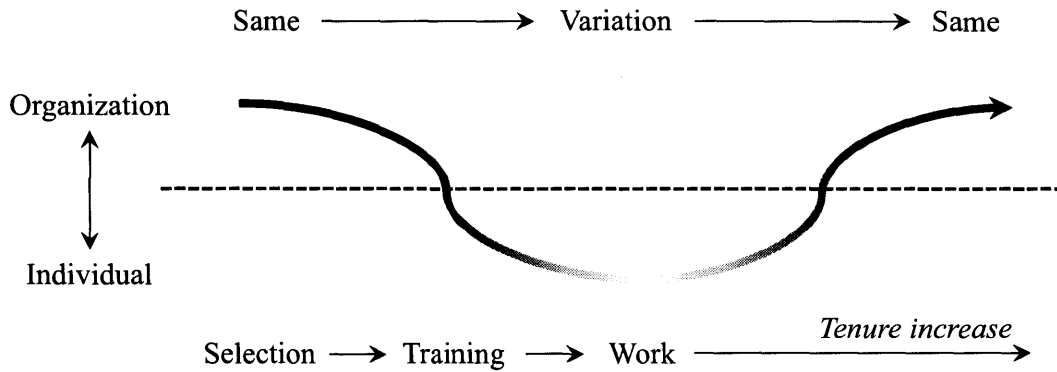
173

individual agency in identity work. Employees—mainly engineers and some marketers—do not

always passively accept the organization's imposition to enact the espoused K-Co man identity.

Focusing on their occupation that provides room for their individualities to be saliently

embodied, these employees hold individual agency in the interplay between individual identity

and strong organizational identity.

This study's empirical findings also show that these occupational differences with regard

to the salient role of individual agency in employees' identity work tend to disappear as one's

organizational tenure increases. As employees' ranks get higher, regardless of the occupation

they hold, their identity work universally comes to center on the organizational side, which leads

them all to become a prototypical K-Co man. This implies that organizational agency takes a

dominant role again in the dynamics of employees' identity work.

Conclusion: Time-Sensitive Nature of Identity Dynamics in the Organization

Figure 5-1 summarizes how organizational agency and individual agency become salient

in employees' identity work throughout different employment stages. It shows that the dynamics

of interplay between organization and individual in employees' identity work are time-sensitive.

At which time point individuals experience organizational life has a significant input into

employees' identity construction processes at work.

FIGURE 5-1
The Dynamics of Employees' Identity Work

Same $\longrightarrow$ Variation $\longrightarrow$ Same

Organization

Individual

Selection $\longrightarrow$ Training $\longrightarrow$ Work $\quad$ *Tenure increase* $\longrightarrow$

Note: The color denotes the strength of organizational identification. The darker the color, the stronger the organizational identification. Specifically, as organizational agency dominates at the beginning, employees show strong organizational identification, but as individual agency becomes salient over time, employees show relatively weak organizational identification. With increasing tenure, organizational agency dominates again, inducing strong organizational identification.

First, at the selection stage, organizational agency prevails with its clear aim: they choose the people having the potential to meet the organization's employee identity needs, filtering out the people who would not fit the espoused employee identity. This engenders a distinct similarity among the people in terms of identity at work. However, from the training stage, individual agency starts to emerge in the identity dynamics, revealing the unique patterns of individuals' identification with the socialization agents that the organization does not expect. In the subsequent work stage, the role of individual agency becomes more salient. Individualities embodied through the occupation play a crucial role in employees' identity work in this stage, which induces significant variation in employees' organizational identification. With increasing organizational tenure, however, organizational agency re-prevails in the identity dynamics. As time spent in the organization is accumulated, employees, whatever occupation they are engaged in, deeply integrate the organizationally espoused employee identity into their own identity. This brings employees back to the same state in terms of identity at work.

The dynamics of "same-variation-same" in employees' identity work identified in the present study reflects the theoretical needs raised by several researchers: taking a dynamic lens in order to capture the fluid essence of individuals' identity work in the organization that emerges and evolves over time (e.g., Ashforth, 1998; Ashforth et al., 2008; Bullis & Bach, 1989). By having all phases of organizational life—selection, training, and work—in the same study, this dissertation responds to this call. It provides a comprehensive dynamic view of organizational identification, which is lacking in previous identity research mostly based on a single point in time.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this section, I discuss how this dissertation is related to previous studies on identity and identification and makes theoretical contributions to them. Both organizational psychologists and organizational sociologists have provided insights on individuals' identity work in organizations. Here, again, I repeat Pratt et al.'s (2006) argument about the current state of identity research: identity research in organization science remains a "loosely affiliated body of research" (p. 238). In the world of research on employees' identity work, three entities have invoked scholarly discussions, which are individual, organization, and occupation. Depending on which among these three the main research focus is given to, different theoretical approaches have been taken. In this dissertation, I tried to make linkages among these previous approaches towards employees' identity dynamics at work and thus make theoretical contributions to research on identity and identification. Below, I discuss this study's theoretical contributions in terms of agency and in terms of structure.

Agency

As discussed before, in explicating employees' identity work in the organization, organizational psychologists' primary focus has been on individual agency, while organizational sociologists' central focus has been on organizational agency. However, by nature, organizational identification—the identity alignment process between individual and organization—occurs through the interplay between individual and organization (Ashforth et al., 2008), which means that to fully identify the *process* towards organizational identification, it is indispensable to take both into account simultaneously. This also indicates that a multi-level explanation is the key to capture the dynamic interactions between the two agents. Chapter 3 of the dissertation exactly responded to this theoretical call. Based on the unique data of K-Co's 4-

week newcomer training program that include both the organizational side (trainers) and the individual side (trainees), this chapter suggests a theoretical model on how organizational identification emerges through the interplay between the organization's intention and individuals' reaction. Eventually, this chapter bridges organizational psychology and organizational sociology by incorporating the two agents each discipline has dealt with separately into one conceptual framework. It also elaborates each by addressing the conceptual limits that occur when each disciplinary approach is solely taken.

Structure

As for the structural/situational variables regarding identity work, organizational psychologists' major interest has been in collectives—where one belongs—such as organizations. On the other hand, organizational sociologists' main interest has been in roles—what one does—such as occupations. However, in work life, where I work and what I do have simultaneously important meanings in one's identity work, and thus in order to fully capture the dynamics of employees' work identity construction, these two situational variables, organization and occupation, need to be considered in one conceptual framework. In Chapter 4, to combine the organizational and the occupational perspectives, I raised the issue of how transparently the organizational identity is projected on the identities of different occupations within the organization, and showed that the degree of this transparency significantly affects each occupation incumbents' organizational identification, inducing its variation. Put differently, an individual's occupational identity, as characterized by how much organizational identity is projected onto it, moderates that individual's identity alignment process between individual and organization. This finding shows that both structural variables, through certain relationships between them, simultaneously influence individuals' identity work. By considering the two

178

structural variables in one conceptual framework, I could reveal the variation in employees'

organizational identification in a strong organizational context wherein variation is unlikely to

occur. This, again, implies that in order to theoretically elaborate research on identity and

identification, bridging organizational psychological and organizational sociological approaches

together is imperative.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Need for Valuing Individualities

Based on the empirical evidence, this study sheds light on the importance of individual

agency in employees' identity work. Even though an organization has regarded its strong

organizational culture based on dominant organizational agency and control as the key factor for

business growth, and that strong culture has actually driven real business achievement, in order

to ensure sustainable growth, a renewed focus on individualities and uniqueness that each

individual employee retains is necessary. As shown in Chapter 3, even in a strongly

institutionalized socialization context, individual trainees do not always act as the organization

expects, and as presented in Chapter 4, some individuals use their occupation as a way of

expressing personal uniqueness in their identity work. A focus on individual uniqueness is

becoming more important with increasing movement across organizations (Arthur & Rousseau,

1996) and changing generational identities (Dencker, Joshi, & Martocchio, 2007). An HR staff

mentioned a recent survey conducted by the HR department, which shows that the young

employees at K-Co actually seek individualities:

> Recently, we ran a survey, entitled "Investigation on Attitudes of Young Generation at K-
> Co." We found that these young people think I and my family are more important than
> the company. They tend to regard the company as a tool to develop their own individual
> capacities. An attitude of self-sacrifice that is necessary for employees working for a

179

large company seems to be getting weaker for them. But, their overall perception of K-Co was not entirely negative. They seem to care for the company to some degree.

Thus, organizations with a strong culture and control need to start thinking about converting the dominant culture and redesigning their HR practices. In the process of selection, training and education, performance appraisal, compensation, and promotion, the actual room for appreciating individual uniqueness and opinions should be secured. In future business, employees' creativity would compose the key competitive advantage, and creativity is, by nature, based on individual unique and idiosyncratic thinking and feeling. This indicates that in order to boost employees' organizational identification, organizations need to cultivate the organizational culture and identity that really values employees' individualities.

Need for Contingent Approach

Another practical implication induced from the empirical findings of this dissertation is related to the significant meaning of occupation in employees' identity work. Chapter 4 showed that employees' organizational identification is significantly contingent on their occupation even within the context of a strong organizational culture. Within K-Co's strong culture, HR staff, with their deeply organization-embedded occupation—embodying and transmitting the organizationally espoused values and norms—takes a powerful core position within the organization, and they set the HRM criteria for the espoused employee identity as centered on the organizational ideal, thus forcing employees to become "K-Co" men. In this HRM architecture, employees identified with the "organization" are supposed to be nurtured and finally well compensated and promoted. However, for other occupation holders such as engineers, unlike HR occupation holders, an employee identified with the "organization" does not necessarily mean the same as an employee identified with the "occupation." For this group

of employees, uniformly organization-focused HR practices may not be able to fully bring forth their competencies and incentives. In their identity work, occupationally performing well and thus becoming a competent professional is more meaningful than organizationally performing well and thus becoming a recognized organizational member. This implies that, for real effectiveness, HR practices need to be designed contingent on occupation. The following three quotes from my interviews with engineers actually raised this issue:

> People are diverse. I believe the work one does defines the person, not the name of the company defines the person. So many jobs within K-Co mean that so many identities coexist within K-Co. K-Co needs to recognize the wide spectrum of employee identities. To be a better company, I think K-Co should be able to embrace that wide spectrum. I feel so far the HR practices and education system have been structured, aiming at just one direction K-Co espouses, which is not appropriate to take in this diverse spectrum.

> Engineers are not likely to work hard, if they're told, "K-Co has set this engineering goal, and because you're an employee belonging to K-Co, you should attain this organizational goal." This approach is not very appealing to them. We engineers all know that as long as we're working within the boundary of K-Co, the aggregate of our individual performances will eventually improve this organization's performance. So, educating "We should work for K-Co!" doesn't need to be over-emphasized. Rather, if the instruction is like "Do your engineering work such as creating new ideas, patenting, and publishing articles under your name," then engineers do their best to generate good performance. "Because we are K-Co, we can develop world-first technology" might work to some extent, but "We're developing world-first technology, so let's go for it with strong self-esteem as an engineer" is a better way of incentivizing engineers.

> For engineers, how loyalty toward the organization is generated is quite simple. Loyalty is not from money. It's through work. It is generated when I feel self-accomplishment, pride in my work, and finally feel that the organization recognizes the value of my work and supports it.

Establishing the occupation-contingent HR system is also important in terms of diminishing engineers' structural "outsider" feelings coming from the perception that they are located in the organizational periphery. In some sense, engineers are doing a core task—product development, the most essential work that eventually produces the organization's financial performance—but, as described in Chapter 4, many engineers perceive that they belong to and

thus are treated as a peripheral group within the organization. HR practices for engineers need to be tailored to highlight and appreciate the significant meanings of their work and occupation and its organizational implications.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the findings of this dissertation are both theoretically and practically meaningful, their generalizability is questionable, as long as they are based on one case study. I chose K-Co because this organization provides, with its clear manifestation of the organizationally espoused employee identity, "K-Co man," an ideal empirical setting to delve into identity and identification issues. However, relevant future research is necessary for generalizability of this study's arguments. I plan to extend my research on identity and identification with two different types of comparative studies.

Cross-Culture Comparison

The first involves comparing the patterns of employees' organizational identification between Korean branches and American branches of K-Co. A society's cultural context has strong effects on the self-concept of its members (Hofstede, 1984; Triandis, 1989). In a collectivistic society like Korea, individuals define meaningful social values much more in collective terms (e.g., group, organization). Collectivists underscore the achievement of group outcomes and subordination of personal interests to guarantee that group outcomes are attained, and people in a collectivistic society regard the self in terms of interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). However, in an individualistic society such as the United States, individual attainment, self-actualization, and self-respect are key social values that must be preserved. The primary concern of individualists lies within their own goals and preferences

182

with the notion of independent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Noting these cultural differences in self-concept, I plan to look into how the process and variation of employees' organizational identification I have identified through my dissertation vary across different cultural contexts, and thus derive a cultural theory of organizational identification. Since K-Co is such a large global company, I believe I would be able to collect enough valid data from its American branches, as I did from its Korean branches.

Within-Culture Comparison

The second extension to my dissertation research involves studying similar phenomena in a different organizational setting from K-Co. In the course of interview data collection, I found that people at K-Co very frequently mentioned another specific Korean company and compared K-Co with it when they were asked about organizational culture and identity. This company is a significant competitor to K-Co, but is known to hold a very different and contrasting organizational culture and identity. Thus, through this comparative study between K-Co and another Korean company, I plan to further elaborate the dynamics of employees' identities within the same cultural context. The current fast changes in the technological and business environments require organizations' agile reactions regarding organizational change in order to engender sustainable organizational performance. I expect this comparative study shedding light on two different scenarios—but each with its own strength—in terms of identity and identification could provide practical managerial implication on how to identify alternative options of organizational identity and employee identity that can ensure a firm's durable competitive advantage in response to external opportunities or threats.

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