Liminal Selves: The Negotiation of Organizational Identification by Grant-funded Employees in Nonprofit Organizations

A dissertation presented to
the faculty of
the Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Ephraim K. Nikoi
June 2010

© 2010 Ephraim K. Nikoi. All Rights Reserved.
This dissertation titled
Liminal Selves: The Negotiation of Organizational Identification by Grant-funded
Employees in Nonprofit Organizations

by

EPHRAIM K. NIKOI

has been approved for
the School of Communication Studies
and the Scripps College of Communication by

Laura W. Black
Assistant Professor of Communication Studies

Gregory J. Shepherd
Dean, Scripps College of Communication
ABSTRACT

EPHRAIM, NIKOI K., Ph.D., June 2010, Communication Studies

Liminal Selves: The Negotiation of Organizational Identification by Grant-funded Employees in Nonprofit Organization (236 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Laura W. Black

This dissertation adds to this body of research on organizational identification and nonprofit organizations by focusing on grant-funded employees in the nonprofit sector. It argues that grant-funded employees are liminal workers by virtue of the nature of their employment, philosophical differences and the organizational structures. This liminality experienced by this group of workers in the nonprofit sector influences their identification processes. It contends that in the midst of multiple identification targets, the most significant factor in fostering organizational identification among grant-funded employees in this study is the passion to help alleviate poverty and the desire to transcend themselves. The study conceptually frames what it means to be a grant-funded employee in a nonprofit organization and the most potent factors in fostering organizational identification among liminal workers.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

Laura W. Black
Assistant Professor of Communication Studies

iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This has been an exciting but challenging journey, but I have never been alone. I want to thank God for this major accomplishment. I could not also have done this without the encouragement and support of my wife Acacia and my kids, Diedrick and Annika. I am grateful for their patience and understanding during this adventure. Your love and support means so much to me. I love you all dearly.

I went through this Ph.D. program with the help of a lot of people. To all the staff, faculty and my colleagues in the School of Communications Studies, I say thank you for your support. I will especially like to thank Dr. Claudia Hale and Dr. Scott Titsworth for their hard work on behalf of students.

I will also like to thank my dissertation committee members, Dr. Tom Daniels, Dr. Devika Chawla and Dr. Judith Millessen for all their work and support. I owe a big gratitude to Dr. Laura Black my advisor and chair of my committee, whose work with me has been nothing short of spectacular. Her hard work on my behalf really transformed the last year of my graduate studies and I am very grateful for that. Thanks Laura for your patience, guidance and encouragement.

My life has taken many twists and turns to get me to where I am right now. It has taken the sacrifices of many people who were willing to invest in me. To all those I have encountered on this journey I say thank you. I will especially like to acknowledge the help of the Kpobi and the Schut families for their support over the years. I do appreciate your investment in me. My goal is to invest in the lives of others too and this Ph.D. is another tool for me to accomplish this goal.

Thank you all.
This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of

my grandmother, Docia Ashley Armarh

whose love of education

spurs me on
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher’s Experience as a Grant-funded Employee</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Nonprofit Worker</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Dissertation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Identification</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification and Identity</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Identification and Social Identity Theory</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Identification as a Process and a Product</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Identification as a Control Mechanism</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Multiple Identification Targets in Organizations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorizing Workers</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulltime Workers</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent Workers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granted-funded Employees as “Contingent Workers”</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant-funded Employees as Liminal Workers</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Organizations</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Nonprofits</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Human Resources of Nonprofits</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question One</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question Two</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question Three</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question Four ................................................................. 49
Chapter Summary ............................................................................... 50
Chapter 3: Methods ........................................................................ 51
Rationale for the Research Design .................................................. 52
Location and Organizational Context .............................................. 55
Participants ....................................................................................... 57
Data Collection Procedures .............................................................. 59
  Interview Protocol and Process ....................................................... 59
  Data Analysis ................................................................................. 63
  Chapter Summary ......................................................................... 69
Chapter 4: The Work Lives of Participants ....................................... 70
  The Work Life of Martha ............................................................. 71
  Martha’s Experience of Liminality .................................................. 74
  The Work Life of Mavis ............................................................... 77
  Mavis’ Experience of Liminality ..................................................... 80
  The Work Life of Joana ............................................................... 83
  Joana’s Experience of Liminality .................................................. 84
  The Work Life of Mary ............................................................... 87
  Mary’s Experience of Liminality ................................................... 88
  The Work Life of John ............................................................... 91
  Chapter Summary ......................................................................... 95
Chapter 5: Results .......................................................................... 97
Results for Research Question One ...................................................... 98
  Examining the Assumed “We” ...................................................... 99
  Other Salient Organizational Identification Themes ..................... 110
  The Meaning of Identification with Organization ....................... 117
Results for Research Question Two .................................................... 122
  Grantors Kept at Earshot ........................................................... 123
  Identification with Funders through the Use of Self-labels ........... 126
  Meaning of Grantee-grantor Relationship .................................. 126
  Identification and Positions in Organizations ............................. 131
  The Joys and Pains of Partnerships with Funders ....................... 135
Emotionality and the Grant-funded Employee ................................................................. 137
Results of Research Question Three ............................................................................ 142
Use of the Assumed “we” to Include Beneficiaries ...................................................... 142
Identification with Beneficiaries through the Use of Self-labels .............................. 143
Other Expressions of Identification with Beneficiaries ............................................ 144
Results for Research Question Four ............................................................................ 149
Identification with Other Stakeholders through the Use of the Assumed “we” .. 149
Identification with Stakeholders through the Use of Self-labels ............................. 151
The Relationship between Grant-funded Employees and their Board of Directors 151
Identifying with other Nonprofits ............................................................................. 156
Chapter Summary ...................................................................................................... 158
Chapter 6: Discussion ................................................................................................. 160
Liminality and its Impact on Grant-funded Employees ............................................ 160
Time, Context and the Liminal Worker ..................................................................... 163
Liminality and Identification Negotiation ............................................................... 165
Identification through Antithesis ............................................................................. 167
Identification and Socialization ................................................................................ 169
Sharing of Responsibilities through Identification .................................................. 170
Theoretical Implications ......................................................................................... 173
Practical Implications ............................................................................................... 177
Limitations and Future Research Directions ......................................................... 179
Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 181
References ............................................................................................................... 184
Appendix A Interview Protocol .................................................................................. 198
Appendix B Member Check Protocol ......................................................................... 200
Appendix C Participants’ Profiles .............................................................................. 201
Appendix D Ohio University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Project Outline Form 211
Appendix E Ohio University Consent Form ................................................................ 226
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Types of Organizations and Number of Participants ........................................58
Table 2: Open Coding Categories of the Use of the Assumed “We” by Participants…101
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The nonprofit sector plays a crucial role in the lives of many people. It is however characterized by low wages and hard work by its workers to fulfill the needs of countless people around the world. Among its workforce are the grant-funded employees. This is a group of people whose employment and projects are dependent on external sources of funding. They are mostly employed with the understanding that their employment is subject to the availability of grants. Those employed as fulltime workers in nonprofit organizations by grant funding are cognizant that their employment with their organizations is temporary because an end to the grant could lead to the loss of their jobs. Being placed in such a position is one of the many causes of the experiences of liminality among grant-funded employees. The question is how does being in a liminal position influence the organizational identification of this group of workers and what does it mean to them? This is the question that this dissertation seeks to answer.

Organizational identification has been the focus of examination by many scholars in fields such as management and communication. It significance in understanding the behaviors of members of an organization and its concomitant effects on morale, loyalty and commitment has been the source of interest for many researchers. Researchers have examined the organizational identification processes of many people within various organizational contexts. There are organizational identification studies among religious groups, businesses part-time workers, workers in transition due to mergers and contract workers (Cheney, 1983; Bullis & Bach, 1989; Garsten, 1999; Gossett, 2002; Kramer, 1993; Mael & Ashforth, 2001). These studies have enhanced our understanding of
organizational identification processes and how to study them. This dissertation takes another look at organizational identification by focusing on a group of people, namely grant-funded employees in nonprofits organizations, whose jobs are generally considered crucial within communities but are constantly not sure about their job security. It argues that the negotiations of organizational identification by grant-funded employees underscore the significance of antithesis and the transcendence of self in forging strong identification between some nonprofits organizations and their paid staff.

The nonprofit sector presents an opportunity to examine various theories with new sets of lenses. Nonprofits organizations have become the cornerstones of the economy of countries and the lives of many individuals and communities. The nonprofit sector is supported by both the private and the public sectors because of its unique ability to provide services that neither of these sectors can provide effectively. The sector is thus a focus of research for many scholars from diverse disciplines (O’ Neill, 2002). A close examination of the literature on nonprofits however, shows a disproportionate attention to the role and experiences of volunteers within the sector. The experiences of nonprofits paid staff members have largely been ignored in the literature.

The nonprofit sector has elements of both the public and the private sectors. This is because they operate as public service rendering organizations but they are not owned by the government. They are owned by individuals, communities and groups of people. An exploration of the paid staff of nonprofit organizations offer an opportunity to examine how employees negotiate their identities in a setting that prides itself in its service to people, not stable jobs wise and exposed to multiple identification targets.
The current economic crisis underscores the unique position of nonprofits and their employees in the scheme of labor arrangements and the provision of services to the needy (Reed, Bridgeland, McNaught, & Dunkelman, 2009). For instance, the reliance on funding from both governments and the private sectors means that nonprofit fortunes are to a large extent tied to the performance of its benefactors. It well documented that although nonprofits receive good part of their funding from individual donors, government play a key role in sustaining many nonprofit organizations (Luksetich, 2008). The impact of such an arrangement is evident in the current state of crisis facing nonprofits as a result of the financial downturn. The dwindling sources of funding from the private and public sectors is causing nonprofits to reduce their staff and overall operations. One of the casualties of this economic downturn is the nonprofit paid worker.

Many nonprofit organizations are laying-off workers because they do not have the resources to keep them on their payrolls. This is particularly prevalent among social service organizations that rely on grants to support their operations (Salamon, 2001). And although this is also happening currently in many sectors of the economy due to the economic recession, it is especially pronounced in the nonprofit sector because of the cyclical and temporal nature of grants. Grant-funded employees are often compelled to think about the security of their jobs because of their dependence on grants. They explore various sources of funding, especially as they approach the end of their grant cycles. The nature of grant funding also means that grant-funded employees must ensure that they follow the tenets of the granting organizations to ensure compliance and grant renewals. An in-depth understanding of how the natures of grants influence the relationships
between nonprofit organizations can tell us a lot about the complex work and relationship arrangements in the sector. It is also important to explore further how the funding arrangements in nonprofits affect the relationships between nonprofits workers and the multiple stakeholders within the sector.

One way of examining these issues is through the use of qualitative research methods to unpack what it means to be a grant-funded employee in a nonprofit and its impact on organizational identification. This dissertation seeks to explore the organizational identification of those employed with grant money to work on grant funded projects. It seeks to examine how these groups of workers negotiate their identification with multiple identification targets and the meanings they assign to these identifications.

Researcher’s Experience as a Grant-funded Employee

I came to this topic not only with an academic interest in organizational communication but also from my experience as a grant-funded employee. A few years ago, I was hired as a director in a nonprofit organization, located in a small town in Appalachian Ohio. The job was to establish a youth development project with funding from the government. The grant required that we attended conferences and meetings with people with similar grants. We received messages and close supervision from the granting department and were encouraged to create a list serve to share ideas on best practices.

As a director of the program, I was not only required to ensure that the program conformed to the dictates of the granting agency, but also to ensure that it fit within the
overarching mission of the nonprofit. The organization I worked for, just like many social
service organizations, had an overarching mission to serve the community in which they
are located. As a program director I was not only required to ensure that I met the tenets
of the grant stipulation but also to ensure that the way I went about it fell within the
overall goal of serving the community. It was easy in many cases to meet the goals of the
organization and those of the granting agencies, when the nonprofits mission was aligned
to the goals of the granting agency. The problem arose when there were discrepancies
between the stipulations of the grants and the goals and modus operandi of the
organization. On numerous occasions, I faced a dilemma as to what is the best course of
action when the organization wanted me to do, or the organization was attempting to do
something that I thought went against what I considered to be the objectives of the grant.
In some cases I found myself conflicted and isolated because of my hesitancy to go along
with the dictates of the organization. In such circumstances I sometimes found myself
identifying more with the granting agency than my organization.

Also, as a grant-funded employee, I was not sure about the security of my
employment within the organization. Every year that I worked with the organization I
watched some of the other grant-funded employees whose grant cycle had come to an end
struggle to find out what to do next. In some cases, the organization tried to find
alternative sources of funding or moved them into other areas within the organization.
Those members of the organization, who could not find other positions within it, were
compelled to leave and find new lines of employment.
My experience as a grant-funded employee in a nonprofit is not unique. There are many employees working for nonprofits who are dealing with multiple identity targets and not sure about the security of their positions within the organization. Asking these groups of people about their experiences working with nonprofits could give us insight into who they think they are, and how they think they are influenced by the circumstances in which they find themselves.

This dissertation is therefore an exploration of the organizational identification of nonprofits workforce whose jobs are dependent on grants. As researcher I was cognizant of my own liminality as both an insider and an outsider (Eastland, 2001; Jackson, 1990). My interviews were informed by my personal understanding of the nonprofit sector. This was an asset as it helped me to ask follow up questions to clarify the positions of the participants. At the same time I was careful not to jump to conclusions about the participants were telling me. As both an insider and an outsider I was able to bring certain perspectives to this study while at the same time learning a lot about the participants as to what it means for them to be liminal workers.

The Nonprofit Worker

Nonprofits rely on both paid and unpaid staff to accomplish their goals. These groups of people make the difference between the success and the failure of the sector. The paid staff of nonprofits differs in many respects from their counterparts in the private and the public sectors in terms of their attitudes towards their organizations and their work, in their attitude towards their work, their vision and levels of commitment (Light,
This makes them a unique group to study in that they offer new perspectives on what it means to work with organizations to achieve specific goals.

The reach of the nonprofits sector is extensive. Nonprofit organizations provide a wide range of services to communities whether it is caring for the sick or helping to facilitate community development (National Council of Nonprofits, 2009). The work of nonprofits cuts across every region and service. They provide the supportive services that are needed by many people thus making them an integral part of the many communities. They are normally small or midsize with 93.6% of them having a budget of less than $1 million (Urban Institute, 2008). However, an aggregate of the nonprofits operations around the world puts the sector as the seventh largest economy in the world (NCN, 2009). Statistics on the nonprofit sector also indicates that the nonprofit sector employs about 9.4 million people and 4.7 million volunteers to operate (Urban Institute, 2008). The nonprofit sector employs 10.5% of the total workforce in the United States.

The significance of nonprofits for both the economy and the provision of essential services cannot be over emphasized. The sector plays an instrumental role as an engine for the promotion of human development and ingenuity. The work of Light (2002) on the characters of the nonprofit sector workforce gives us clues into why the sector is such a powerful force. As noted by Light, workers in the nonprofits, unlike their counterparts in the public and private sectors, are concerned about service like the public sector but are owned by individuals or groups of people like a private business. Their focus is thus on how to solve the problems of society. It is this through desire to serve their communities that they derive their joys and satisfaction. According to light, nonprofit workers are
more likely to identify the talents and competencies of their colleagues and leaders. They are committed to their missions and do whatever it takes to accomplish them.

It is this desire to change the world, coupled with the limited resources, that creates problems for nonprofits. In the same report, Light (2002) noted that many of the research participants readily acknowledge how their structure, for instance just focusing on providing service make it difficult for them to increase their capacity and be more effective. Most make the case for the need to have more room for creativity and more employees to be more effective. Light noted that:

The bad news is that the lack of enough employees to do the job appears to be intimately related to stress and burnout. Overall, 41 percent of nonprofit employees strongly agreed that they are burn-out in their jobs, while 36 percent strongly agreed that they always have too much work to do. But among employees who have said their organizations only sometimes or rarely had enough employees to do their jobs well, the levels of stress and burnout were much higher. (p. 8).

Nonprofit workers, in spite of their enthusiasm for the kinds of job they do, are also faced with a lot of challenges that ultimately affects their attitudes and relationships in their organizations. The sector lacks enough employees and resources due to budget limitations. The workers are therefore compelled to do a lot more with little, thus subjecting them to a lot of hardships which ultimately forces some of them to leave their organizations. As Light noted in his report, the decision to quit is not because these
workers do not like their jobs, it is because they lack the requisite tools and support to be effective.

The concluding points of Light are worth considering by nonprofit researchers because they demonstrate the complexity of the sector and the questions that still need to be answered:

The nonprofit sector is blessed with employees that come to work for the right reasons because they have jobs that give them a chance to make a difference. But the degree to which they can leverage this energy on behalf of their organization’s mission is highly dependent on funder and organizational practices that either actively support or ignore their potential. Board and executive directors need to look carefully at how they manage their human capital. Are their practices designed for workers who are intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated? …At the same time funders need to ask how they can assure that the sector maintains its competitive advantage in coming years, starting with a hard look at how their own policies about infrastructure and operating expenses affect the sectors workforce. (2002, p.12)

Light claimed that the stakeholders in nonprofits affect the workforce in one way or another. For instance, the availability of funding and funding stipulations from funders affect the workforce in that it regulates their behavior and attitudes. Unfortunately, much of the literature on nonprofit workforce, have been limited to statistical data on how many are employed, what they earn and their contributions to the economy. This limited scope in the examination of the nonprofit workforce does not do justice to a complex
sector that requires a lot of attention in terms of the thoughts and the experiences of its workers. The examination of some these issues raised by Light calls for an in-depth examination of what nonprofit workers think about their working environments as well as the stakeholders that they work with what it means to them. A qualitative study of the experiences of nonprofits workers is one means by which we can explore some of these issues affecting nonprofit workers.

The main theoretical frameworks used in this dissertation are liminality and organizational identification. I chose to use the framework of liminality because it facilitated the categorization of grant-funded employees a unique group of workers who are dependent on external sources of funding to sustain their jobs and the provision of services. Liminality helps to explain the position and characteristics of people between multiple positions and do not wholly belong to any of them (Turner, 1967). As employees who are dependent on grants, grant-funded employees are many times see themselves as part-time workers even though they are employed as fulltime workers by the virtue of their grants.

The second theoretical framework used in this research is the theory of organizational identification. Organizational identification is the extent to which individual feel part of an organization or see themselves as an embodiment of the values and goals of that organization (Cheney, 1983; Tolman, 1943). It is a means of forging unity among a group of people who otherwise divided. Using the theory of organizational identification in this research helps with our understanding of what it means to be a grant-
funded employee in a nonprofit organization. It also allows us to examine what forces foster or inhibit organizational identification in the nonprofit sector.

Statement of Problem

The nature of the nonprofit sector provides an opportunity for researchers to analyze the sector using theories such as organizational identification. Research in organizational identification have focused on areas such the rhetorical tactics that are used by organization to promote identification among their employees; the role of employees in the identification processes and how the statuses of employees influence their organizational (Bullis & Bach, 1989; Cheney, 1983; Gossett, 2002; 2004; Mael & Ashforth, 1993). The nonprofits sector presents a unique setting for further exploration of the theory of organization. By focusing on grant-funded employees this dissertation examined how liminality and multiple identification targets shape the identities of nonprofit workers, how they describe these identities and what it means to them. This dissertation therefore fulfills dual purposes of examining issues of identity in nonprofits; and secondly contributing to the discussion on organizational identification processes in organizations with multiple identification targets.

The dissertation fulfills these dual purposes by interviewing grant-funded employees in small nonprofits organizations in Appalachia Ohio that provide various services to the people in the region. My choice of participants and the location were based on several reasons. First, a close examination of the literature on nonprofits shows a disproportionate emphasis on boards and volunteers of nonprofits and not much on nonprofit workforce. The focus on these two groups of people in the nonprofits is
understandable to a certain extent. Board members are the governing bodies of nonprofits. These groups of people sacrifice their time and resources to ensure that nonprofits function effectively.

Related to the above observation is the fact that previous work on nonprofits have largely focused on volunteers and their roles and identities in the sector (Isham, Kolodinsky, & Kimberly, 2006; Tomkovick, Lester, Flunker & Wells, 2008). Volunteers are considered to be key factors in the operations of nonprofits. The number of hours they volunteer each year to nonprofits adds up to a substantial savings. The focus on the services volunteers however tend to sometimes overshadow their partnerships with the paid staff in nonprofits. An examination of the perceptions of the nonprofit workforce will give us much insight into who they think they are in relation to their organizations and other stakeholders.

Finally, studies of nonprofits have largely focused on “big organizations” with little emphasis on small organizations. As noted by Toepler (2002) too much attention has been focused on big nonprofits at the expense of small grassroots ones. The focus on big nonprofits divert attention from the small ones that are in trenches in small communities scattered around the country providing essential services to their clients. A focus on these groups of workforce in small nonprofits located in various communities can provide invaluable information on what it means to work for organizations that are constantly in search of grants to sustain their operations. The choice of service organizations in Appalachia Ohio is therefore based on my perception that nonprofits
located in small communities could give researchers much more insight into the workings of nonprofits and in this case how their members negotiate their identities.

Purpose of the Study

The significance of the nonprofit sector is underscored by how much research has been done on the sector. The sector is featured prominently in the political science, sociology, history, anthropology, economics and organizational literature (O’Neill, 2002). Unfortunately, as noted by Lewis (2005) communication scholars have not explored the sector as much as they should given its complexity and uniqueness. The complexity and the need to explore the nuances in the nonprofit sector us further emphasized by Light’s (2002) argument that the sector presents a lot of challenges to its workforce. What makes the examination of organizational identification among the nonprofit sector workforce an important study is that it examines a group of workers whose employment is liminal in nature, subjected to multiple identity targets and have invested interest in the kinds of work pursued by their organizations.

Overview of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five main chapters. The first three chapters focus on the rationale for the study, the questions the dissertation seeks to answer, and how I intended to answer them. The last two chapters were devoted to answering the research questions and describing the theoretical implications of the study.

Chapter One introduces the research by examining why I chose to conduct this research. It provides the theoretical framework around which the research is based.
Chapter Two of the dissertation provides the theoretical foundation for the research by reviewing the literature on nonprofit organizations and theory of organizational identification. This chapter argues that the nonprofit sector offers a unique organizational setting to study issues of identification and what it means to employees. This is because it is a sector that provides critical services for individuals and communities yet unstable in many ways, mainly because of its lack of reliable funding. The employees are therefore constantly battling for the survival of their jobs and organizations as well as for the wellbeing of the people they serve. The chapter therefore offers research questions that guided the research.

Chapter Three describes the methods used in this study. It provides the rationale for the methodological choices and describes the specific locations, data gathering techniques, and analytic approach used in this research project. As described in this chapter, the dissertation involves a qualitative study of organizational identification of nonprofit workers. Data were collected by interviewing grant-funded employees from multiple nonprofits organizations to ascertain who or what they identify with as nonprofit workers and what these identities mean to them. The choice to interview people from multiple organization was a means to find out what common experiences they share as grant-funded employees, what this means to them as a way can enhance our understanding of organizational identification whereby the tenure of the employees are not clearly defined.

Chapter Four examines the liminal positions of the participants in the study. It takes a critical look at the work lives of five participants to examine how liminality
permeates their work lives and how their experiences can inform our understanding of the complex nature of liminality. This chapter is also aimed at contextualizing the work lives of the participants as a means of helping us to understand their identification processes.

Chapter Five presents the results and findings of the qualitative analysis. It uses the data from the interviews to answer the research questions. The data are analyzed to find reoccurring themes that provide answers to the research questions. The result chapter is thus a compilation of the reoccurring themes among the research participants related to their identification processes in their nonprofit organizations.

Chapter Six of this dissertation examines theoretical and practical implications of this research. It examines the theoretical contributions of the research to our understanding of the role of communication in the promotion of organizational identification in some nonprofits organizations. It also discusses the limitations of the research and the opportunities they offer for future research directions. The final section of this chapter is the conclusion which summarizes the findings in the research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations occupy spaces between fulltime and contingent work arrangements due to the nature of their work arrangements and overall nature of the nonprofit sector. The liminality of this group of workers makes them an interesting group to research because the nature of their jobs exposes them to multiple identity targets. An exploration of their organizational identification therefore requires the examination of their positions in the workplace literature, the context within which they work and how their work with nonprofit organizations influences their identities. This chapter extends the arguments made in the Introduction chapter by more thoroughly examining the literature on organizational identification, work arrangements and the nature of the nonprofit sector. The chapter ends with the research questions the dissertation will attempt to answer.

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification embodies the relationship between an organization and its members. It refers to the process in which an individual’s identity is influenced by the organization with which he/she is associated (Cheney, 1983; Pratt, 1998; Tolman, 1943). It is defined as a process by which organizations attempt to foster closer relationships with their members (Cheney & Tompkins, 1987). As a process it is a means of limiting the differences between people by using their shared qualities as a means to get them to see each other as one with a common purpose. Nonprofits by their nature, present complex multiple identity targets to its workforce. This makes the sector an
exemplar in exploring the complexities of organizational identification given the status of its workforce and the multiple identification targets.

Organizational identification is a means of bridging the differences between organizations and their members through the fostering of unity between them by emphasizing common goals and values. Organizational identification was introduced into communication studies by Cheney (1983) as another way of looking at the applicability of Burke’s (1950) idea of bridging the differences between people. It postulates that there are divisions among individuals and one way to overcome these divisions is to explore ways to make these differences less pronounced and to emphasize the common values that that are shared by people. As a result rhetorical tools, such as sharing of common experiences and recognition of an individual’s connection to the organizational goals are some of the rhetorical tactics organizations use to promote organizational identification.

There is now a growing movement to use Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a means to explore the topic of organizational identification (Dewine & Daniels, 1993; Scott, 2007). SIT is a social psychological theory that was developed to help explain how people manage their identification with multiple groups. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that people engage in behaviors that help them to distinguish themselves from other people. SIT postulates that individuals are subject to multiple identities, they therefore use various communicative means to show their identification with various targets. SIT postulates that people tend to create categories that help them to differentiate themselves from others (Gioia, 1998). This is an inductive study that used an open coded method for a discourse analysis of the themes that emerge from the data. It examined the use of the
assumed/ transendent “we” and self-labels as indicators of identification, but also went further into discourse analysis to examine other indicators of identification and the meanings attached to them.

The literature on organizational identification, shows the presence of multiple identification targets within organizations, the mechanisms used by organizations to promote organizational identification, and the role of the members in the process as well as the situations in which organizational identification is eschewed by both members and organizations due to one reason or another (Barker, 1998; Gossett, 2002, Russo, 1998; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). The literature also shows the levels and types of identification seen in organizations. There are those who avoid full identification and others who are ambivalent in their identification (Elsbach, 1999).

The process of organizational identification as noted by Gossett (2002) is complex because it is dependent on a variety of factors including finances, statuses and the goals and values of the organization and the individual members. The literature so far has explored how these factors influence the organizational identification process. There is still the need for further examination of how liminal positions of organizational members influence their organizational identification. How do grant-funded employees negotiate their identity in the midst of the multiple identity targets in the nonprofit sector? Who or what do these workers identify with and to what extent do their relationships with other employees affect the process of identification?

Grant-funded employees fall under different categories in terms of their positions in organizations. The limited research on this group of workers shows that they are no
clear categories to place them. Each organization and institution has its own ways of classifying them based on the type of grants their working on and their status within the organization (Boncich, 2008).

**Identification and Identity**

The concept of organizational identification is based on the foundational work of Burke (1950). Burke argues that divisions are integral part of the human experience. These divisions are based on our unique characteristics as human beings. However, it is imperative that human find ways to bridge these differences. It is through the bridging of these differences that people from diverse backgrounds can work together and more importantly avoid the problem of “war” which in many cases are exacerbated by cooperation. As far as Burke is concerned, “cooperation” does not go far enough in healing the differences between people because it is limited in scope and function. He argues that “identification is compensatory to division” (p.22). That is it is through the process of identification that the divisions between people can be mended to ensure through unity in purpose.

Burke (1950) identifies *consubstantial, grammar, symbolic* and *rhetoric* as key elements in the concept of identification that are essential to making the process possible. Consubstantiality according to Burke refers to the act of acting together in spite of individual differences. At the consubstantial people are brought together by their “common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes” (p.21). These common values and aspirations reduce the divisions between people and cause them to work together towards common goals.
Grammar according to Burke, deals with the common language that is adopted by all the partners in the process. The symbolic relates to the unique characteristics of the individuals involved in the process and the tacit understanding that in spite of the working relationships people still have their unique characteristics which they bring to making the bridging process.

Rhetoric is considered by Burke as a key component in the identification process. It is significant in that it helps us to navigate through the differences in ideas and backgrounds that threaten the process of identification. It is through rhetoric that individuals move beyond their personal interests to join forces with others to limit the divisions between them for the sake of peace and the accomplishment of other goals.

Identification is therefore a persuasive mechanism or a rhetorical tool that is used by both organizations and individuals as a means of narrowing differences with a goal to being one (Burke, 1950; Cheney, 1983). The idea of highlighting commonalities between people while downplaying the differences between them is important for a harmonious relationship that can result in mutual benefit. Identification is thus initiated with the results of a better relationship in mind. This is because fostering stronger relationships among individuals and with organizations is more likely to result in better understanding between them and hence a better working environment and higher productivity.

Drawing on the work of Burke, Cheney & Tompkins (1987) argue that organizations use various rhetorical methods to actively promote organizational identification as a means of controlling their members such as newsletters and training manuals. By promoting core values of the organization and inviting their members to
imbibe them, organizations obtain the loyalty of their members. Organizational identification according to Pratt (1998) “occurs when an individual’s beliefs about his or her organization become self-referential or self-defining” (p.172). That is the point at which an individual share “significant” common beliefs and values together with their organizations. The sharing of common values means that the individual see him or herself as an embodiment of what the organization stands for and prepared to exhibit these qualities as much as possible to highlight this unity.

Organizational Identification and Social Identity Theory

Social identity Theory (SIT) examines how people enact particular identities as a means to distinguish themselves from other identities. The root of this theory can be traced to Cooley (1902) and Mead (1934) whose work on symbolic interactions and what it means what it means for an individual to who he or she claims to be. Individuals associate and behave in particular ways project particular identities. These actions and sometimes inactions help individuals to exhibit particular identities that, in turn, allow them to be defined by those identities (Tajfel & Turner 1986; Steele, 1988).

The argument for making distinctions between identities as argued by Tajfel (1982) makes a strong case for the use of SIT in the exploration of organizational identification of members or organizations (Dewine & Daniels, 1993; Gioia, 1998; Scott, 2007). The examination of the organizational identification of alumni groups using SIT by Mael & Ashforth, (1992), shows the relevance of SIT in examining organizational identification. Interactions and communication practices, tell us a lot about what an individual values and what he/she wants to be identified with. The rhetorical tactics,
expounded by Cheney (1983), based on the work of Burke, to indicate how organizations attempts to create “common ground” by emphasizing the common values and goals as well as the use of the transcendent “we” all show the role of communication in creating in and out groups to promote organizational identification (Gioia, 1998).

The use of various rhetorical strategies to create an in-group shows the significance of creating identities by defining one-self in relation to others. The strategy of “identification through antithesis” as argued by Cheney (1983) is one means by which organizations and individuals identity with each other through the exclusion of the other or seeing the other as not having the same qualities and values as them.

SIT examines organizational identification through two main lenses: categorization and self-enhancement (Gioia, 1998). The concepts of categorical antecedent, is a process through which individuals make a distinction between their groups and those of others. It is a means of showing one belief that his/her group or organization is an embodiment of his/her values and goals (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Mael and Ashforth (1992) has expounded three main hypotheses under which self-categorization enhances organizational identification; The first hypothesis is that organizational identification is likely to occur in organizations that are unique; secondly it is more likely to occur when the opposing group or organization is relevant; the third hypothesis argues that organizational identification is less likely to occur when there are conflicts and competition within an organization.

The concept of categorization in organizational identification shows that external factors play significant roles in the organizational identification of members of an
organization. It shows that the uniqueness and the positions and nature of other organizations are significant in facilitating the organizational identification of members.

The second SIT antecedent that influences organizational identification is self-enhancement. This concept argues that members of organizations are more likely to identify with the organization if their association leads to an elevated prestige (Gioia, 1998). The works of Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) and Mael and Ashforth (1992) show the role of prestige in the process of organizational identification. Three hypotheses also illuminates how self-enhancement to positively influence organizational identification: The three hypotheses are: when the organizations prestige is high; when the organization has certain attractive qualities and lastly when association with the organization enhances the self-esteem of the members.

SIT thus provide a framework within which to examine how grant-funded employees working on multiple projects in multiple organizations with multiple stakeholders who within the framework of the organization they identify with. The significance difference between the rhetorical tactics expounded by Burke and Cheney is that it provides a framework within which to see how people separate themselves from others as a way to define their identities. It is therefore a mechanism for unity as well as separation depending on the identification target the individual chooses to associate identify with. Understanding both the Burkian/Cheney conceptualization of identification and the one promoted by SIT scholars provide multiple lenses to examine the issue of identification in the nonprofit sector. But for the purposes of this research, I limited myself to the use of a version of grounded analysis.
Organizational Identification as a Process and a Product

Organizational identification is not only focused on the end result. It is both a process and product (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Bullis & Bach, 1989). Arguably, the process of organization identification starts long before an individual decide to work for that organization through the process of primary and secondary socialization. Once an individual starts working for an organization the process of identification is intensifies through organizational rhetoric.

Organizational identification becomes a product at the point where the individual largely appropriates the values and other characteristics of the organization. Thus the study of organizational identification must not only focus on what it means to be identifies with an organization, it must also explore the process of identification and the factors that influence it. The organizational identification process requires mutual efforts by both organizations and their members.

As noted by Bullis and Bach (1989) the onus of identification does not only fall on the shoulders of organizations. Members of the organization also take active part in identifying identification targets and how closely they should relate to them. The process of identification in organizations is thus a negotiation process involving all stakeholders as they seek and align themselves with organizations (Eicholtz, 2000). The product of identification is thus the result of the actions of both employers and employees as they seek to enact common identities to facilitate a harmonious relationship to enhance their job satisfaction and productivity.
Organizational Identification as a Control Mechanism

Organizational identification has been considered by some as a control mechanism because it is designed to get members to act in accordance with the dictates and values of the organization (Barker & Tompkins, 1994; Corman & Cheney, 1998; Gossett, 2006; Tompkins & Cheney, 1989). By putting in imputing values and ways of doing things into their members, organizations are able to exert a certain level of control over them. Identification with the values and norms of the organization means that members must behave in particular ways to maintain their relationship with the organization. Failure to identify could therefore result in a dysfunctional relationship between the organization and its members.

The Multiple Identification Targets in Organizations

The issue of identification becomes even more complex for employees when they are confronted with multiple identification targets (Scott, 1997). The complex nature of organizations means that there are several competing identities within them (Foreman & Whetton, 2002). In their examination of the multiple identities in organizations, Larson & Pepper (2003) noted that identifications is “a communicative process through which individuals either align themselves with or distance themselves from one or both of the target/source of identity” (p.530). This definition assumes that there are multiple identities in organizations. These identities can be positive or negative depending on the point of view of the member.

In her examination of the temporary work industry Gossett (2006) argues that the multiple stakeholders in the industry present temporary workers with multiple identity
targets. This situation is not helped by the fact that temporary workers have to answer to multiple agencies that are either trying to get them to identify with them or trying to keep them at bay. The lack of clarity as to which target, the temporary agency or the organization they are temporarily assigned to leaves them vulnerable and unable to identify with the two targets. This situation could be attributed to the fact that their relationships with both organizations are temporal in nature and although the temporary agency would want stronger identification, they are only a means to an end.

Larson and Pepper’s (2003) definition also means that organizational identification is a selective process based on the assumption of member ‘agency” in preferring one identity over another. This brings into sharp focus the issue of power implicit in the organizational identification process. It raises questions such as: what level of power does the individual have to either imbibe or refute the identities of the organization? Secondly, what level of power does the organization have to superimpose a particular identity on it members? Thirdly, how do the circumstances of members of an organization influence the organizational identification process and product? An exploration of organizational identification of nonprofits could give us much more insight into the above questions.

As noted by Bullis and Bach (1989) there is the tendency for employees to align themselves with multiple targets within a period of time. This assertion is based on the assumption that members of organizations have agency that they exercise during the course of their tenure with an organization (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004). There is still the need for further studies into what causes members of organizations to shift from one
identity target and the consequences of such identity hopping. An exploration of this nature could inform us more about the communicative processes in organizations and how it influences their members with multiple identity targets.

A key element that Larson and Pepper’s (2003) definition leaves out is the fact that not all organizations are ready to facilitate the identification of their members with them. As the study of Gossett (2002) of temporary workers shows, the status of workers in organizations influences organizational identification. Organizations target their messages to employees based on the type of relationships they have with them. In this case, because the employees were temporary workers the organization kept them at “arms length” refusing to facilitate strong identification with their places of work compared to fulltime workers. This is because temporary agencies do not want to be used as recruiting agencies. Henson (1996) points out the penalties for hiring temporary workers on permanent basis by organizations hinders organizations from hiring temporary workers thus keeping them in a perpetual state of doing temp work and creating revenue generation for temporal agencies.

Organizational identification is varied and complex. In addition to identification or dis-identification, neutral and ambivalent identifications can also occur within organizations (Elsbach, 1999; Gheradi, 1995; Kreiner & Ashforth 2004). While some employees fully identify with their organizations by imbibing their values and defining themselves in terms of the organization, others choose not to. And there are others who are not sure of themselves or do not care. This expanded model of identification indicates that organizational identification is complicated with a wide range of possibilities.
Categorizing Workers

Organizations are increasingly relying on different sets of employees to meet their labor needs. Harvey (1989) classifies these labor arrangements in the postmodern world as core and periphery. The diverse statuses, work arrangements and remuneration of employees within organizations have created a complex set of relationships within them. Nonprofits also use these labor arrangements to meet the needs of their clients. In many nonprofits one can find core members who constitute the paid staff and the volunteers who make up the peripheral group. In some instances however, one cannot easily distinguish between core and peripheral workers due to the nature of the labor arrangements. Nonprofits are therefore uniquely positioned to give us much more insight into how these labor arrangements influences organizational identification.

The core group of workers is normally fulltime workers around whom the essential work of the organization revolves. In addition to job security, core employees enjoy higher remuneration, and other benefits that are not available to many workers (Garsten, 1999). Harvey (1989) postulates that periphery workers are those who work in supporting roles in organizations. Periphery workers include contingent workers such as part-time and contractors. In many instances these groups of workers have weaker affiliation with their organizations because their works are considered supplementary.

The different work arrangements in organizations mean that workers are subject to different times and work expectations. In exploring these differences in times and its impact on relationships, Ballard and Gossett (2008) developed the typology of nonstandard work relationships. This typology underscores the complex nature of
employee categories in the workplace. The four work arrangements of standard, contingent, virtual and non-membership are important in our understanding of the changes in organizational structures to accommodate both individual and organizational needs. Ballard and Gossett’s typology gives us a window into the complex nature of the relationship that develops due to the nature of work arrangements. Time, they argue, is a significant factor in the construction of these relationships. The time constructs of permanent/temporary and flexibility/fixed labor arrangements are indications of how the status of an employee in organizations influences the type of relationships they develop with both their organization and their colleagues. As argued by Ballard and Gossett the standard and nonstandard work arrangements not only have impact relationships in the workplace, but also affect identity development.

The classification of workers is virtually always not neatly defined. As noted by Reich (1992) organizations have created a web of connections designed to achieve their goals. Fulltime and contingent workers are all part of the webs designed to accomplish the goals of an organization. As with webs, they crisscross each other. Some employees fall within multiple categories of work arrangements. In the next few pages I discuss the fulltime and part-time work arrangements and the complexity involved in classifying grant-funded employees in each of these categories.

**Fulltime Workers**

Fulltime or “real” members of organizations are the employees that organizations are structured around. In the core/periphery dichotomy of organizational structuring they fall within the core group. That is, they provide the essential services that help
organizations to fulfill their missions. In cases of a shift in the fortunes of the organization, these groups of workers are the last to be laid off because of their status as the pool of employees around whom the organization is built.

Fulltime employees normally enjoy several benefits from their employers. Benefits such as health insurance, retirement benefits, more access to information and places within the organization. The significance and characteristics of this work arrangement is normally couched in the discussions of contingent work arrangements (Gossett, 2002).

The extant literature on contingent work arrangement is sprinkled with the benefits and in some respects the downside of fulltime employment. While some contingent workers aspire to become fulltime workers others are not interested in assuming that position because of its “inflexibility” and time commitment to the organization. The fact that many organizations are attempting to limit the number of fulltime employees as part of their cost containment strategies, is an indication that this are group of workers enjoy a lot of benefits that the envy of some contingent workers.

Arguably, not all grant funded employees are fulltime employees of nonprofits. While some are employed on part-time and temporary basis there are others who are employed fulltime to undertake work on the projects stipulated by the grants. This group of employees enjoys some if not all of the benefits associated with being fulltime employees. They receive benefits such as health insurance, have access to information and are part of the core team charged with the execution of grant stipulations.
Light (2002) postulates that the nonprofit workforce is comparatively healthier, talented and committed to their organizations more than their counterparts in the public or private sectors. This makes them a unique group to study. However, a closer examination of the literature on nonprofits shows a disproportionate focus on volunteers. This is understandable given that fact that many nonprofits rely on volunteers to fulfill their missions. An in-depth examination of the work of fulltime employees in nonprofits is invaluable in exploring how they handle relationships and identities within their organizations.

Contingent Workers

Contingent work entails a work arrangement in which an employee maintains a loose relationship with an organization. As a late industrial phenomenon, the use of contingent workers is becoming a strong feature in many organizations around the world. The employee employer relationships are increasing becoming temporal in nature with employees not being able to count on fulltime employment (Morse, 1998). Even those employees who are fulltime employees sometimes assume the role of contingent workers due to the fact that they are not sure when they will be laid off. The turbulent nature of employee relationships with their organizations makes contingent work arrangement a prominent feature of organizations.

Parker, (1994) identifies different types of contingent workers. The list includes day laborers, guest and service workers, as well as temporary and part-time workers. These workers can be found on farms, factory floors, healthcare centers and stores providing essential services that complement the work of fulltime workers.
In his work on temporary workers in the United States, Henson (1996) postulates that cost containment and a change in economic circumstances are the main causes of the increase in the use of contingent workers. The recession in the early 1980’s caused many companies to reexamine their organizational structures to meet the changes in the business environment. The changes in the business environment lead to rethinking of business modules that will ensure the efficiency of organizations. It meant the substitution of core workers with transient ones and the creation of temporal positions that can be filled by anyone provided they have the knowledge and skills (Garston, 1999).

Additionally the downturn in the economy also meant the need for fewer workers. In the absence of choices, workers were sometimes compelled to take low paying contingent work as they sought for opportunities to gain full time employment (Gonos, 1998). The choice of contingency work by workers is therefore sometimes dictated by the belief that contingency work creates opportunities for them to gain fulltime jobs. Parker (1994) however argues that less than 20% of contingent workers have the opportunity to be employed fulltime. This is mainly due to the exorbitant fees imposed on organizations by temporary agencies for making their temporary workers permanent.

The temporary work arrangements also share parallel characteristics with grant-funded employment including a lack of fulltime status, being low paid, lacked benefits such as health and workers’ insurance. They are also short term in nature and ambiguous in both the structure and content. And in many instances, it result in the under utilization of skills by workers (Parker, 1994). In effect the industry is designed to help employers to contain cost and maximize profits. Hence though contingent workers are remunerated
for their work, the conclusion of many scholars is that the industry benefits companies more than it does the workers.

*Granted-funded Employees as “Contingent Workers”*

Grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations share some of the characteristics of contingent workers. Even those who are employed fulltime by the organization experience some of these characteristics because of the nature of grants. Grants are cyclical in nature. They are awarded within stipulated periods of time and the grantees are required to use them to undertake specific projects. Once the cycle ends, they are either renewed or terminated. Although many grant making organizations require grant recipients to develop alternative means of sustaining grant-funded projects, in many instances the solution to solve the fragility of grant funding is to look for alternative grants to sustain the projects. This leaves many grant-funded employees unsure of the security of their jobs. Their jobs seem temporal in nature since by the end of the grant cycle they are required to either look for a new job or other funding sources to secure their jobs. The constant ebb and flow of job security with grant based employment can be likened to those of temporary workers who are not sure of their continual employment.

Nonprofits rely on a collage of funding sources to sustain their programs and pay their employees. In some organizations, the salaries of employees are from different grant sources. Employees are therefore required to be working on part-time basis on different projects. The distributions of the workload between projects are normally based on the percentage of the salary of the employee that comes from a particular grant. The fulltime
jobs of some grant-funded employees in nonprofits are thus made up of the amalgamation of multiple part-time jobs within the organization.

Grant-funded employment is as ambiguous as contingent work. The employees are not sure about the security of their jobs once the grant cycle ends, they are made to work on multiple grants projects with different grant cycles and stipulations. This can also lead to tension in organizations as employees are required to meet diverse criteria for grants within the organization. Grant-funded employees are required meet the requirements of these funding organizations by splitting their time between different projects (LeRoux, 2002).

Grant-funded Employees as Liminal Workers

The position occupied by grant-funded employees seems well defined from the outside, but a closer examination of their status within nonprofits indicates why it is important to examine their identification with their organizations. As members of nonprofit organizations they are presented with multiple identities targets. These multiple identity target is the result of the multiple stakeholders in nonprofits. These stakeholders include but not limited to funders, board members, clients and other likeminded people providing social services through nonprofits and the organization that they work for. In the next section I discuss the placement of workers into categories and how grant-funded employees in nonprofits fit within them.

Grant-funded employment is an intriguing area of research for both organizational and communication scholars. This kind of employment focuses the attention of the employees not only on the organizations with which they are associated and the services
they offer, but also the organizations they are dependent upon to secure their employments and support their services. The nature of grant-funded employment also places employees in unique positions. The definition of roles and tenures of these employees are in many instances ill defined or at best temporally defined because of the nature of their funding sources. In many respects these employees fall within and between core, periphery and contingent working arrangements. This makes grant-funded employment liminal in nature.

The concept of liminality refers to state of being in which one is torn between their previous and impending states. Arnold Van Gennep is largely credited with the concept of liminality (Turner, 1967). Turner (1967) expanded the concept of liminality by exploring how people who are undergoing rituals are subject to undefined positions and how this affects their psyche. Turner describes those in liminal positions as ritual people who are “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law custom, convention and ceremonial” (p. 97). That is, liminality involves being in a position in which one is uncertain about his or position in the community.

Turner (1967) draws on the rituals of associated with Rites of Passage to illustrate this state of being. The rights of passage of the Ndembu people in Central Africa, forces the initiates to be isolated and stripped of their identity as they make the journey into a new identity. The boys undergoing initiation to become men are first stripped of their boyhood identity and they experience the liminal position right between when they are
isolated for the ceremony and the end of the ceremony, when they are considered by the community to be adults and are accorded all the privileges associated with being adults. During the period of separation before the ceremony the candidates for the initiation are considered to be “neophytes” and “… are likened to or treated as embryos, newborn infants, or sucklings…. Their condition is one of ambiguity and paradox, a confusion of all the customary categories.” (Turner, 1967. p. 96 & 97). The liminal state is thus a state of lack of clarity, ill-defined and an unpredictable state that could change at anytime depending on extenuating circumstances. Turner (1969) describes this state of being as significant in many ways. It is a state located between an original state of being and an anticipation of an impending state of being. The liminal state is a rare combination of the familiar with the unfamiliar and the stable with the unstable. A person in this state of being has a certain level of vulnerability that is humbling and unnerving.

At the core of the discussion of liminality is the issue of power. Those in liminal positions feel a sense of powerlessness since their identity and roles are not clearly defined. As is the case of the initiates in the Ndembu culture, luminal positions are characterized by “submissiveness and silence.” The initiates must listen to what the community has to say and act accordingly. This is important because the fate of the initiate in the culture as to whether they are confirmed to be adults is dependent on the decision of the priest and the rest of the community. Working closely with the community and fulfilling one’s duties is a means by which an individual is guaranteed security or success in the initiation ceremony.
The concept of liminality, although has been used a lot in Anthropology and performance studies, offers lenses through which one could examine issues of identity in organizations. The initiation ceremonies that are designed to confer new identities onto people and the oscillation between multiple identities, as well as the compulsion to follow rules when one is in a liminal state, make the concept a useful tool in examining organizational identification.

My preliminary observation of grant-funded employees in nonprofits indicated that they are usually subjected to the dictates of the nature of grants and their cycles. Some organizations also, put them in different categories, sometimes not according them the full privileges of fulltime employees. Using the concept of liminality as a framework to examine the positions of grant-funded employees is therefore my means to understand and explore how the nature of their work affects their organizational identification processes and what that means to them.

It is important to point out that liminality as a framework for analysis has already made its way into organizational studies. The concept has been used to examine organizations and their membership. The concept provides frameworks for exploring organizational structures and the relationships between organizations and their members. In her foundational work on the relationship between temporal workers and their organizations, Garsten (1999) explores how changes in organizational structures are leading to changes in work structures and the repercussions of these changes. Through the lens of the concept of liminality, Garsten argues that temps in organizations are in liminal states of being presenting them with opportunities and risks for both them and
their organizations. The liminality of temps stems from their lack of full integration into organizations. In some cases some of these temps are hopeful for full employment while others just like the idea of temping because of the flexibility associated with it.

The increase in the number of temp workers in Europe and the U.S, Garsten (1999) contends, is the result of changes in organizational structures. These new structures are departures from the traditional structures that guaranteed lifelong employment for workers. The increase reliance on temps complicates the relationships between organizations and their workers. She argues that:

‘Temping’, as a liminal phase, provides an institutional pocket which contains the gem of future change in the way we view work, organization, and subjectivity. While innovation may take place in established social structures, it is at the interfaces and limens that they most frequently occur. The position of temporary assignment employees as a ‘betwixt and between’ offers an interesting entry-point from which to understand the dynamics and dilemmas of post-industrial organizations. (p. 604)

The argument expounded by Garsten (1999) underscores the changing environment of the workplace and its concomitant changes in relationships. The use of temporary workers has several implications for both the organizations and their memberships. As noted by Garsten, temps like “artists and shamans” are not fully connected to the institutions with which they are associated and while they enjoy some of the services offered by their organizations. The distinctions made between full time employees and temps with regards to the use of facilities, access to information and services are
indications of the complex relationship that exists between organizations and their temps and the role of liminality in this relationship.

Examining organizations through the lens of liminality gives organizational scholars opportunities to explore the nuances, dynamism and complexity of organizational life. The extension of Garsten’s work on the liminality of temp workers by Tempest and Starkey (2004) shows how the concept can be employed in various ways to enhance our understanding of organizations. Tempest and Starkey’s examination of cross teams in the television industry and their impact on organizational learning is an indicative of the shifting natures of organizations.

Tempest and Starkey’s (2004) argument that organizational learning can take place using employees who are partially aligned to the organization through temporary assignments is an indicative of the blurring of boundaries and the fluidity in the relationship between organizations and their employees. It substantiates the argument that temporary or contract workers can contribute as much as possible to the success of organizations in spite of their liminality.

The role of temporal workers in organizations continues to receive attention because of the challenges it poses to the traditional organizational structures. The liminality of this group of employees stems from their peripheral positions within organizations. The liminality of grant-funded employees stems from the positioning between and among the employment categories of core, peripheral and contract. This positioning of grant-funded employees offers an interesting phenomenon of study through the lens of liminality.
The positions of many grant-funded employees are not clearly defined in many nonprofit organizations. While some organizations consider them core workers and accord them all the privileges associated others consider them part-time or even contingent workers. In some organizations grant-funded employees only work on their grant funded projects and once the funding source(s) dries up they are laid off. In some organizations they are assigned other positions with other sources of funding or forced to look elsewhere for employment. The move to other sources of employment sometimes takes place within the course of the grant cycle. This means that while these employees are still with their organizations, they are compelled to look out for other opportunities, not necessarily because they do not like the organizations they are working for but because they are not guaranteed employment. The precarious nature of grant-funded employment makes the use of the concept of liminality an appropriate lens to examine the organizational identification of these employees.

Liminality, as an anthropological prism, offers organizational communication scholars an opportunity to explore the relationships between organizations and employees in liminal states of being due to the nature of their jobs. For instance, the examination of organizational identification through the scope of liminality could be informative on the perceptions of members of organizations who have to negotiate multiple identities. Due to the multiple stakeholders in the nonprofit sector in addition to the temporal nature of grants, grant-funded employees sometimes seemed to be “suspended” between multiple identities.
The ill-defined positions associated with the concept of liminality also provide lenses to examine people in situations where their statuses are not clear or change frequently. As argued by Turner, (1969) those at liminal states are both “betwixt and between”. They are neither here, nor there. This state of being undoubtedly an awkward position to be placed in because it presents the individual with certain challenges such as a desire to return to his/her old familiar state or to press on to their new position. The lack of clearly defined positions, can also significantly affect the identification processes of employees in that it places employees in situations whereby they are do not feel secured about their roles and positions.

Nonprofit Organizations

As I indicated in the introduction chapter indicated, nonprofit organizations play significant roles in the provision of varied services. Boris (1999) defines nonprofits as “…formal organizations which do not distribute profits and are exempt from federal taxes by virtue of being for public purposes described in the revenue code” (p.4). This definition emphasizes some characteristics that constitute nonprofit organizations. First, they are formal, legal entities that are established for specific purposes. This differentiates them from just a group of people who come together to undertake some projects. Second, unlike private enterprises, their goal is not primarily to make profit. This means any “profits” that accrue from their services must be used to enhance their services. Third, they fall under special tax code, 501(c) that exempts them from paying taxes. The tax exemption status is one of the most significant distinctions between nonprofits and other organizations.
The United States and the rest of the world have witnessed an astronomical rise in the number of nonprofits in the last few decades. These organizations are providing services including but not limited to shelter for the homeless, food, health as well as educational programs both domestically and internationally (The Foundation Center, 2008). As the government attempts to reduce its size, the role of nonprofits in the provision of services has become even more important. According to the Urban Institute there are currently about 850,455 charities, 104,276 foundations and 463,713 other nonprofits registered in the United States (Blackwood, Wing & Pollak, 2008).

The sheer number of nonprofits is an indication of the significant role they play not only in the provision of services but also the economy. It is estimated that in 2006 the NPO contributed about $666.1 billion to the United States Economy (Blackwood, et al, 2008). In that same year, nonprofit organizations generated about $1 trillion in revenue. These revenues are mostly through donations, fees, government and private grants. Nonprofits fill in the gaps that are created as a result of government decision to limit the provision of services as part of cost cutting measures in areas the private sector considers less profitable (Weisbrod, 1983). Health and human services make up about 48% of all services provided by nonprofits (Berry & Arons, 2003).

Structurally nonprofits are located between public and private sectors. They share the characteristics of both sectors. Their primary goal is to provide services to the public just like the public sector only that they are privately owned. They are distinct from the private sector because profit is not their primary focus. The distinguishing elements of nonprofits identified by Lewis (2005) they are privatively owned; do not generate profits;
self governing; focus on voluntarism; and are established for the public good, shows the
broad scope that is covered by this sector.

The nature and scope of nonprofits have generated interest in various spheres of
studies. The significance of the sector is evident in its wide attraction in the area of
political science, sociology, anthropology, economies and organizational studies
(O’Neill, 2002). These fields of studies have examined the sector from varying points of
view thereby expanding nonprofit theories. In the scheme of research in the nonprofits,
however, communication lags behind the other disciplines. This dissertation is in part a
response to the clarion call by Lewis (2002) for communication scholars to explore the
unique environment provided by nonprofit structures. It aims at adding to our
understanding of the relationships that exists between nonprofits and their organizations.

_Funding Nonprofits_

In 2006, individual foundation and corporate donations to nonprofits was about
$295 billion with the majority of it coming from private individual donations (Berry &
Arons, 2003). Additionally, in 2005, about 9% of the revenue of nonprofit organizations
was from government sources (Blackwood, et, al. 2008). The percentage of government
contribution however fluctuates and sometimes goes as high as 33% (Berry & Arons,
2003). Both the state and the federal government use varied means to provide resources
for nonprofit organizations (Luksetich, 2008). Some of these methods include direct
grants, contracts, tax exemption; tax credit bonds and other legislative instruments
(Smith, Shue, Vest &Villareal, 1999). Each of these forms of providing resources to
nonprofit organizations has its own unique characteristics that affect the organizational identification of employees in nonprofits that is worthy of study.

According to Ott and Shafritz (1986) a grant is “a financial award made to support a project, program, individual or organization in general” (p.173). This definition of a grant distinguishes it from other forms of financial support for an organization or individual. For instance, unlike contracts, grants are not awarded as a form of purchasing certain services. It is however important to note that they come with guidelines and outcomes to be met by the recipient (grantee). Ott and Shafritz (1986) identify about eleven (11) different types of grants that can be awarded to an organization. These grant types are based on what the granting organization wants to accomplish.

The nature and types of grants offered to organizations makes it imperative that communication is maintained between grantees and grantors to ensure grant compliance (Lara-Cinisomo and Steinberg, 2006). For instance, it is important to know whether the grant can be used to pay the salaries of employees or if it should be used for materials for a project. As noted by Lara-Cinisomo and Steinberg (2006) complying with funder requirements for nonprofit organizations can be challenging. The process of ensuring that funders receive the requisite data on the projects that they are funding, takes many human hours to compile and this invariably affects relationships within the organization. The amount of time and resources needed to meet the demands of the stakeholders has been shown to influence the activities of organizations.

In her analysis of the relationships between nonprofit organizations and their stakeholders LeRoux (2009) found that although nonprofits attempt to balance the time
and resources they spend on their clients and funders, in many instances they spend more time and resources trying to meet the demands of their funders. It is thus not surprising that LeRoux has called for a further examination of how “funders transmit values to nonprofits and shape their organizational practices” (p. 181). The “contentions” between nonprofit organizations and their funders over values makes the study of the identification of nonprofit organization workers an interesting topic of research. The question that needs more investigation is how grant-funded employees negotiate these sometimes competing values between funders and their organizations as they shape their identities.

Grant making is not the only source of identity target within nonprofits. In recent years many nonprofits have added social entrepreneurial ventures to their activities as a means of raising fund to support their programs. These activities are carried out by nonprofits to raise funds. They are normally in the form of making and selling products and services. This phenomenon is mainly in response to the sporadic and limited funding that nonprofits get from their funding sources and has raised concerns among critics who argue that they distract nonprofits from their core values and missions (Frumkin, 2002). These ventures compel nonprofit workers to focus on not just their mission of providing services to their clients but also have their focus on generating funds like the private sector. This schizophrenic behavior in nonprofits could place nonprofit workers in a binary, torn between altruistic values and profit orientations.
The Human Resources of Nonprofits

Nonprofits are established to deal with pertinent issues in society that both the private and public sectors are unwilling or unable to tackle because they are controversial, costly or not profitable in monetary terms. The issues nonprofits work on are thus important to the community. It is easier for them to mobilize likeminded people to work on issues that are important to them. The strength of the nonprofit sector is its ability to forge social capital. Social capital refers to the relationships that are built among people to take action on specific issues (Coleman, 1988).

The creation of social capital has largely been dependent on the work of volunteers. The Independent Sector studies show that volunteering is crucial for the survival of many nonprofit causes. It estimated that Americans volunteer around 50 billion hours every year (Smith, 2002). In monetary terms volunteer hours would be around, $215.6 billion, saving nonprofits about 43.3 percent of cost in wages (Blackwood, Wing & Pollak, 2008). These people spend their time in both small and big organizations championing the causes they believe in.

The work of volunteers in nonprofit organizations does not however preclude these organizations from hiring workers to help meet their goals. Blackwood et.al. (2008) estimate that in 2005, about 12.9 million people worked for nonprofit organizations. In 2006, nonprofit organizations paid a total of $489.4 billion in wages and salaries (Blackwood, et. al 2008). For many women and minority groups, nonprofits provide entry points into the workforce (Boris, 1999). This is understandable when examined against the fact that the majority of the services, particularly human services, provided by
nonprofits are geared towards minorities, women and children. For instance, in 2006, over 4 billion dollars was disbursed by grant funding nonprofits to organizations to provide services to minority groups (Foundation Center, 2008). Nonprofits thus provide opportunities for these groups of people to actively participate in finding solutions to problems that are plaguing their communities.

The nonprofit workforce has a number of positive qualities that make them unique compared to their counterparts in the public and private sectors. The report of the extensive research conducted by Light (2002) show that the relationships between nonprofit workers and their organizations are very good. Nonprofit workers are more likely to enjoy their work. The report by many workers indicated that they like to help people and to be part of a mission designed to solve problems draws attention to whom or what these workers identify with in their line of work. Light’s research indicates that many of these workers in the nonprofit sector were concerned about the missions of their organizations and their contributions towards accomplishing them. The focus of nonprofit workers on the missions and programs of their organizations in Light’s report makes the socialization processes in organizations relevant in this examination of the identification of grant-funded employees.

Research Questions

Nonprofits organization attract employees who are interested in serving the needs of people (Light, 2002) As organizations designed to provide services that may not be appealing to the private and the public sectors, they require people who are ready to fight the odds to ensure that clients are served. The natures of nonprofits make them
convergences of multiple stakeholders. That is, they are compelled to deal with multiple interested parties ranging from their funders to the communities they serve. Those working for nonprofits are thus exposed to these stakeholders who are potential identity targets. Understanding these identity targets and the meanings nonprofits workers attached to them could enhance our understanding of how the identity of workers are shaped by their nature of their work environments.

As the literature on organizational communication affirms, organizations go to great lengths to through the use of several rhetorical strategies such as the use of newsletters, group activities and other identification strategies to get their members to identity with them. However, in the face of the competing identity targets in nonprofits and their own mechanisms to get nonprofits workers to identify with them, how do nonprofits workers negotiate their organizational identification? The first sets of research questions that this dissertation answered were:

*Research Question One*

How do grant-funded employees describe their identification with their organization? What meanings do they describe associating with this identity target? Funding sources play significant roles in who is hired and for how long as well as the nature of services offered by nonprofits. Grant-funded employees are thus required to develop relationships with their grantors as a means to ensure that they meet their stipulations. Grantors are noted for organizing training programs, conferences and other means to get those working with their grants to identify with their vision.
Research Question Two

How do grant-funded employees describe identification with grantors? What meanings do they describe associating with this identity target?

Those who work with the nonprofit sector have given several reasons for doing so. However one significant reason given by workers is their desire to bring about social change and make a difference in the lives of others (Light, 2002; O’Neill, 2002; Salamon, 2001). This assertion by nonprofit workers means that nonprofit workers consider their clients significant in their decision to work in the nonprofit sector.

Research Question Three

How do grant-funded employees describe their identification with the beneficiaries of their services? What meanings do they describe associating with this identity target?

Grant-funded employees not only work with members of their organizations, they are also required to work with other employees doing similar jobs or those with similar objectives (Lara-Cinisomo & Steinberg, 2006). Exploring the identity issues that are generated by working with these multiple groups of people each with its own identity could be informative on how workers negotiate their identities.

Research Question Four

What other identity targets do grant-funded employees identify as being important defining who they are as employees of nonprofits? What meanings do they describe associating with these identity targets?
Chapter Summary

In sum, this dissertation examines how grant-funded employees describe their organizational experiences and their identification with the multiple targets they are presented with in their daily work lives. This study makes contributions to both the general literature on nonprofit organizations and also the scholarship on organizational identification of liminal workers. In the following chapter I describe the methods I use to examine these research questions.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This dissertation used qualitative research method to examine how grant-funded employees negotiate their identification in the nonprofit sector. The primary method was interviews with participants recruited from different organizations located in the Midwest. This method was chosen to examine how the participants, grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations, describe their identification processes and what these processes mean to them. The choice of the research method was thus informed by the research questions that sought to examine the points of view of the participants’ identification processes and what meanings they attached to them.

Organizational identification refers to the relationship that members have with organizations with which they are affiliated. It refers to the perception of having common values and goals with an entity by members of that entity (Tolman, 1943). This sense of commonality shared between organizations and their members define the individual’s relationships with that organization.

The relationships between organizations and their members are complex because of the multiple identification targets (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). The nonprofit sector, with its organizations’ reliance on multiple partners to accomplish its missions and goals, also present their members with multiple identification targets that tend to influence the behaviors, attitudes and perceptions of their members as they negotiate these targets (Golden-Briddle & Rao, 1997).

Identification targets are important to members in that they are indications of what is significant to the members and their organizations (Larson & Pepper, 2003).
Understanding what these multiple identification targets mean to the members is thus essential in understanding why the members choose to identify more with one target as against another. One means to understanding how members of organization negotiate their identification is to talk to them about their experiences with the organization and other identification targets. By giving them the opportunity to reflect on their activities and what they mean to them the researcher can gain invaluable information about who these members believe they are in relation to their identification targets, they identify with certain target and it means for them to identify with particular targets.

In this chapter I examine the rationale for the choice of the research design, the data collection and analysis processes.

Rationale for the Research Design

Qualitative research methods have been used by many researchers to examine identification in organizations. In this research I chose to use qualitative research methods because qualitative research methods will offer me rich data of the experiences of the research participants to help me answer my research questions. By using interviews to collect the data and using interpretive approach in my analysis I was able to answer the research questions that I was interested in.

At the onset of this research, I examined the various research methods that have been used by scholars to examine organizational identification until I settled on the method that I used for this research. I could have chosen to use Cheney’s Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ) or Mael and Tetrick’s (1992) six item questionnaire to conduct this research but they could not help me answer satisfactorily the second part of
my research questions which deals with the meanings members ascribe to identification with specific targets. The qualitative research method that I considered using was Turning Point analysis used by Bullis and Bach, (1989) to examine how the organizational identification of members shifts over time. I was however, not interested in mapping out the shifts in the identifications of the participants. My choice of using discourse analysis for this research was dictated by two main factors; first my interest in finding out how the participants drawn from multiple organizations describe their identification with similar targets and what meanings they attach to these identities; and second the advantages that qualitative research methods offers in helping to unpack the issues I was interested in.

Qualitative research methods use, allows the researcher to probe and to understand the nuances associated with issues of identity in organizations. As noted by Albert, Ashforth and Dutton (2000) organizations are complex, it is therefore, imperative that researchers take this complexity into consideration when examining organizational identification. As a means to understand how the relationship between organizations and their members evolve over time. Bullis and Bach (1989) use turning point analysis to explore how the relationships between organizations and their members change over time. Gossett (2002) uses ethnographic observation and interviews to explore how the status of temporary workers affects their identification processes. The use of qualitative research methods in the aforementioned examples shows how qualitative research methods can be used to explore the issue of organizational identification.
Qualitative research methods allow the exploration of the way language is used and the meanings generated. It is a means of exploring the behaviors and the lives of people (Mason, 2001). The descriptions of the relationships between grant-funded employees and their organizations are critical in understanding the identification process of this category of workers. The experiences of grant-funded employees are varied and rich sources of data with regards to their identification processes in organizations. The answers to the questions on the values, goals, interested of grant-funded employees will give me much insight into how they negotiate their identities in the nonprofit sector. The use of qualitative research methods could provide much insight into the values, qualities and goals that are shared by grant-funded employees and their multiple identity targets.

The use of qualitative method for this study will also enabled me to explore how grant-funded employees interact with other stakeholders within and outside the organization. The discourse and descriptions of relationships between grant-funded employees and management, volunteers and grantors, will yield rich sources of data that can give much insight their identification processes, whom or what they identify with, what factors influences these identification processes and how they identify with the various targets both within and outside the organization.

Furthermore, understanding the particular context within which grant-funded employees work will give me the opportunity to tailor my interview questions in order to get an understanding of their identification processes given their particular situations. For instance my ability to distinguish between the identification processes of grant-funded employees associated with large nonprofits such a university and small nonprofit
organizations, will enrich my study in that, it may yield information on for instance how the identification processes differ from one organization to another based on the size.

The lived experiences of grant-funded employees in organizations are rich sources of data on the identification processes. Using qualitative research methods thus provides me with the opportunity to solicit how these employees negotiate their identities in these nonprofit organizations. Since this study the identification processes of these employees in organizations, qualitative research methods seemed more appropriate for this study.

The use of qualitative research methods comes with certain responsibilities to ensure the integrity of the study. Firstly, the credibility and plausibility of the answers to the questions I posed to the participants (Holstein & Gulbrium, 2000). My responsibility as a researcher was therefore to recruit participants who have the requisite experiences in nonprofits and could share them with me. Secondly, I ensured that the participants trusted me, that anything they told me will be kept confidential and that pseudo names will be used to protect their identities.

Location and Organizational Context

The location for the research was in Appalachia region of Southeast Ohio. The region is made up of twenty nine (29) counties scattered around the Appalachia hills. The region, boasts of lush vegetation and natural beauty that attracts outsiders every year particularly during the deer hunting season. According to the 2000 Census, the median income of an Appalachian Ohio household is $31,649. The per capita income of the people in the region is $16,870 with 17.7% of the children living below the poverty level. The Appalachian region of Ohio lags behind in many areas according to the 2000 census.
Over 21% of the adult Appalachians do not have high school diploma or GED. Over 36% of adults between the ages of 21-64 are not working. 38.8% of residents in the region drive over thirty minutes out of their county to work in other areas. Also, 12.7% of the residents between the ages of 21-64 have disability.

The 2000 Census of Appalachia paints a picture of a region that is need of resources and opportunities for its residents. The coal mining that used to sustain the region has long withered in its influence with regards to employment and the provision of other services. Many of the residents in the region rely heavily on industries such as lumbering, tourism and light industrial complexes. Some of the counties located in the region are among the poorest in the state of Ohio.

Nonprofits play significant roles in the lives of many residents in the region. These organizations provide various services from social services to the operation of thrift shops as ways to help to help the needy in the region. As could be inferred from the statistics from the 2000 Census, the region is lagging behind comparatively to other areas. The residents are falling behind in both education and economic opportunities. A lot of people in the region therefore rely on nonprofit organizations and on the nonprofits on the other hand rely on the government, foundations, individual donations and social enterprises to sustain their operations.

An examination of the funding resources of nonprofits in the region as reported by the Foundation Center (2007) indicates the precarious nature of grant-funding of nonprofits in the region. The Appalachia region represents a quarter of all the counties in Ohio. Unfortunately, the region’s share of resources from foundations falls far below
expectations. The total assets of the 132 foundations in the region represent only 2.5% of the total amount of foundation assets and 2.7% in giving in the state of Ohio. This means that many of the nonprofits in the region rely heavily on external sources of funding for their operations thus subjecting them to the vagaries of funding.

My choice of the region as an area of focus in this dissertation was therefore due to the precarious nature of funding for nonprofits and the opportunity it offers to examine a workforce that was unstable due to their heavy reliance on external sources of funding. This situation provides an opportunity to explore some of the complexities associated with negotiating one’s identity in a critical sector that is unstable.

Participants

For the purpose of the research sixteen (16) participants were recruited from nine (9) different nonprofits organizations for interviews. There were ten (10) females and six (6) males. The initial proposal was to have 16 interviews and two focus groups. The analysis here is data collected from 16 participants. My attempts at getting participants from various organizations scattered around the region for focus groups proved extremely difficult and after several attempts, I decided to proceed with the data that I had. The decision to proceed was based on the pattern of homogenous accounts of the experiences of the participants I was interviewing for the study. After several interviews I was not getting anymore unique stories from the participants, which was an indication of saturation to me (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

A snowball method was used to recruit participants for the research. Snowball sampling is the process whereby the researcher recruits participants through the process
of referrals (Warren, 2002). The snowball method of recruiting was appropriate for this research because it provided me access to the network of nonprofit workers within the region. By tapping into the network of grant-funded employees, I was able to gain access to those who have direct experience working on grant projects. The snowball method of recruiting research participants therefore ensured that I was able to reach those who have the requisite experience that allowed me to answer my research questions.

Recruiting participants from different organizations was important to this research because it was my way of knowing the identification process of grant-funded employees in different nonprofit organizational setting. This rich data enhances our understanding of the theory of organizational identification. Table 1, below shows the different types of organizations represented in the research and how many participants were represented.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Organizations and Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The diversity of accounts of grant-funded employees’ experiences could also be used as a means of verifying and validating the organizational identification process in nonprofits.

Data Collection Procedures

Discussing the relationships between employees and their organizations can be a sensitive topic for some people. Organizational identification is important for many organizations because it is one of the ways by which organizations ensure higher morale and productivity (Cheney, 1983). Prior to beginning my research, I expected that the interviews with the participants would be challenging because of the nature of the topic as it sought to find out the kinds of relationships the participants had with their organizations and their stakeholders. As noted by Corbin & Morse (2003) it is important for researchers to ensure that the research participants were comfortable with sharing their views. I asked the participants to choose the places where they wanted to be interviewed. I also made sure that they understood that at any particular point they could choose to discontinue with the interview.

At the beginning of every interview I, explained the purpose of the research to the participants and then asked them if they will be willing to participate. This was then followed by the signing of the IRB consent forms indicating their willing to participate and my obligation of confidentiality and accurate representation of their perceptions to them. The following are the interview protocols and processes.

Interview Protocol and Process

The collection of data proceeded immediately after the recruitment of a participant. When a participant was identified a place and time was arranged to meet for
the interview. The interviews took place in the participants’ workplaces and coffee shops. The main criteria for interview locations were based on what was convenient for the participants since most of the interviews took place during the weekday.

At the beginning of each interview I took the participants through the IRB consent forms to inform them about the research and to ask their permission to participate in the research. Participants were also informed that pseudonyms will be used in the write up to prevent any possibility of recognition of their identities. It was heartening to note that none of the research participants indicated any reservations about participating in the project. Some seemed to have waited so long for someone to come and talk to them about their work as grant-funded employees in the nonprofit sector. This was evident in their readiness and eagerness to talk to me about their experiences as nonprofit workers.

The interview questions were designed to answer the research questions guiding this research. They were adapted and modified from multiple organizational identification questionnaires and interview protocols such as Cheney’s Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ) and Gossett’s (2002) interview protocol for studying the organizational identification of temporally workers. The questions focused on how grant-funded employees saw themselves in relation to the multiple identification targets in their organizations and what meanings they attached to the identification targets they chose to identify with. The interviews were guided by the following questions:

1. How long have you been working with this organization?
   - What motivated you to work for this organization?
   - What is your role in the organization?
- What are the goals and mission of this organization?
- What do these goals and mission mean to you?
- In what ways would you say you have changed since joining this organization?
- What does being a member of this organization mean to you?

2. What agency(s) fund the program you are currently working on?
   - How will you describe the mission and goals of the granting agency (s)?
   - Describe the mechanisms used by the granting agency to communicate their objectives to you?
   - How will you describe the working relationship between you and the granting agency?
   - How will you describe the working relationships between the granting agency and your organization?
   - What does working on grant projects mean to you?

3. Who are the beneficiaries of the program you are working on?
   - How will you describe your relationship with these clients?
   - What does working with the beneficiaries of your services mean to you?

4. Describe some of the people and/or organizations that are important to you in your line of work.
   - Why are these people and/or organizations relevant in your line of work?
   - What does working with multiple stakeholders mean to you?

5. What is the best thing about working as a grant-funded employee?
6. What is the worst thing about working as grant-funded employee?
7. Is there anything that you will like me to know about working on grant projects that I have not already asked?

Kvale (1996) argues that interviews must be both thematic and dynamic in nature. Thematic means that it must not lose focus on the purpose of the study. In discussing the identification of grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations it is
easy to “stray” into other areas of nonprofit work, such as the services they provided, thereby losing focus on organizational identification, which was the main focus of the research. The interview questions were the guidelines that helped me to stay focused on what the research reason for the research. I also relied on my experience in the nonprofits sector to maintain dynamism during the interviews by asking relevant questions or making further probes into issues that a participant might have forgotten or glossed over that may be relevant to the research.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The use of tape recorders in interviews gives the researcher the opportunity to not miss participants’ answers to questions (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Unlike taking notes, which can be challenging depending on how fast the interviewee talks, audio recording captures what was said by both the researcher and the participant thus making it possible for the researcher to make a better sense of the interview (conversations). The interviews were recorded to ensure an accurate representation of the viewpoint of the participants.

Transcribing is essential in the process of ensuring the integrity of a research (Warren, 2002). The transcription of the data by the researchers “allows the researcher to listen to the interview in a more studies way” argued Lindlof & Taylor (2002, p.205). Researcher transcription, Lindlof and Taylor further argue, serves as a means of initial process of data analysis. In line with the recommendation by Lindlof and Taylor, I personally transcribed all the interviews. The interview transcription yielded a hundred and eighty four (184) double- spaced pages of data.
Data Analysis

Data analysis forms a core part of the research process. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) define analysis as “the process of labeling and breaking down (or decontextualizing) data and constituting them into patterns, themes, concepts, and propositions” (p. 210). The effectiveness of data analysis is thus dependent on the effective management of data, through their careful interpretations. As an interpretive work, the analysis of the data sought to interpret the research participants’ views about their identifications and the meanings they attached to them.

Initial Interpretations

An initial analysis of the data started during the data collection phase of the research. This included taking fieldnotes during the course of the interviews. As noted by Lindlof and Taylor (2002), aside notes and commentaries constitute significant portion of the data analysis process. The data analysis to answer the four research questions therefore started on the research field.

The data analysis continued through the use of open coding for discourse analysis. The open coding was guided by the research questions thereby focusing attention on the relevant data that helped to answer the research questions. For instance to address the first research question, I went through each transcribed interview to examine what each participant said about their relationships with their organizations. Through this open coding system I identified how they use the assumed/transcendent “we”, their use of self-labels and other descriptions of identification with their organizations as well as what they mean to them. The open coding therefore helped to me to focus on the arrears
within the data where the participants talked about their identification with the multiple identification targets in their organizations.

The use of the research question in this step also helped to narrow my analysis to themes that were relevant to my research. Using research questions as guides in the open coding process helped to make the analysis more focused (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The open coding was thus a means to identify the elements that helped to answer the questions about participants’ relationships with identification targets and what they mean to them.

Examining Discursive Markers of Identification

The next step in the analysis was a discourse analysis to identify elements of identification and their meanings. The use of the assumed or the transcendent “we” has been argued by Cheney (1983) to be an indication of identification with particular entities. The first data analysis using the open coding system was the examination of the participants’ uses of the pronoun “we” as referent to their identification with particular identification targets and within what context.

This analysis help to identify which identification targets the participants show as having commonalities with. It was through these that I identified the initial directions of the identification processes of the participants. The process involved going through the transcripts of each transcribed interview to identify how they use the pronoun “we” as an indication of an inclusion in the other. The analysis of the use of the “we” was not only an identification indicator but also a means to show how the participants identify with identification targets to engage in particular activities or relate to other entities.
The analysis of the data, therefore, included the examination of the assumed and the transcendent “we” on two levels: 1) as an indicator of identification and 2) as an indicator of relationships and activities between the object of identification and other targets of identification. The processed entailed counting the number of times the assumed and transcendent “we” was used by the participants to show their inclusiveness in a particular identification target. Thus in addition to examining each transcribed interview to see how the assumed “we” was used, I also counted to get an idea of the number of references made by the participants about the targets.

Analyzing the use of the assumed or transcendent “we” alone as a determinant of identification could be misleading. This is because the use of the “we” by the participants could be in reference to for instance just their membership of the organization. It is therefore imperative that other markers of identification should be used to ensure an understanding of the identification target the participants were interested in. The next step in the analysis, the examination of self-labels is thus part of the triangulation mechanism to ensure what the participants say about themselves and their identification process.

Another discursive marker of identification that I examined was the identity related self-labels participants used to describe who they are in relation to their identification target and the roles they play. Identity self-labels is a means of expressing how people saw themselves in relation to others or institutions (Black, 2009; Martin, Krizek, Nakayma, & Bradford, 1996). Self-labels are the means by which people show who they are in relation to others. For instance, when someone says “I am the gatekeeper of this organization” it could mean you cannot get anything from the organizations
without his knowledge or consent. In this example the person indicates what his role is in the organization. Examining the identity related self-labels used by participants, was therefore a means to explore how they view themselves in light of their identification targets. The process of identifying self-labels included again examining each transcribed interview, to look for any form of labels and metaphors that the participants used to describe their relationships with particular identification targets. I then examined these self-labels and put them in categories. I then examined the relationship between the identified self-labels and the identification targets identified in the research questions. To that I did not miss any of the identification targets that grant-funded employees identify with their organizations; I included the fourth research question as a means to examine other possible identification targets within the nonprofit sector that grant-funded employees tend to identify with.

*Examining other Identification Targets*

The fourth research question was designed to examine other identification targets that were important to the research participants. This analysis again involved taking each interview and examining the most frequent identification targets that were discussed by the participants. The process entailed a lot of cross-examination of the emergent identification targets that were most recurrent in the data. This process sought to identify additional identification targets.

*Coding for Meanings*

Finally, to address the last part of each of my research questions I engaged in inductive analysis to code for the meanings that participants assigned to the different
The data analysis was therefore an inductive process that examined what the participants had to say about themselves, their identification targets and their roles. Inductive process involves the amassing of particular instances to draw conclusions. This research drew on participants drawn from multiple nonprofit organizations who had a common characteristic as grant-funded employees. The process of analysis therefore entailed examining their individual experiences and perceptions about identification and finding the common themes between them to draw conclusions and answers to the research questions. The strength of this method of analysis was that, it enabled me to take a wider look at the world of grant-funded employees and what they have in common and how they differ in their identification processes. By doing an inductive analysis of this nature, I was able to explore the factors that positively and negatively influence their identification processes thereby understanding of how they negotiate organizational identification in the midst of multiple identification targets and what they mean to them.
Member Checks

It is however important that qualitative researchers do not just end their research after their analysis. The interpretations of qualitative data reflect the views of the research participants. One means of ensuring an accurate representation of the views of the participants is to give them the opportunity to ascertain whether the conclusions you have drawn from the data is an accurate reflection of their views (Emerson & Pollner, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1973). Member checking is one means by which the researcher could ensure the integrity of his work. As part of analysis of the data for this research, did a member check of the some of the participants in the research to find out if my interpretations of their points of view were accurate. As indicated by St. Pierre (1999) member check could be done in different ways. One means of doing it is to give research participants excerpts of the analysis to read and to offer feedback about its accuracy.

For the purposes of this research, I contacted six of the participants via telephone and asked them whether my interpretations of their views were accurate. In addition to ensuring the accuracy of my interpretations of the data I also wanted to ensure that this research was not limited to the understanding of just the participants and the organizations they represented but that could have implications for other grant-funded employees in other organizations. The questions that I had for the selected participants were about their individual opinions on their organizational identification as well as the three major conclusions that I have reached in this research namely; their strong identification with their organizations and clients; identification through antithesis and the theme of transcending self (See appendix B for sample Member Check Protocol).
All those contacted in the member checking agreed with my interpretations of the data. One participant, Joana, the Vista worker was the only one who said her identification had shifted since I interviewed her. She said after spending a few months with her host organizations she now identifies with them more than she does with her primary organization, Americorps. Steven another member that I contacted said, he does not necessarily wake everyday thinking to himself I am going to work to help fight poverty, but every day at work he feels like he is making a contribution towards ensuring that young people do not fall through the fail in their endeavors. Angela, Karla, Jesse and Victor, all agreed that they identify strongly with their organizations and see themselves as working towards the alleviation of poverty and helping people, as I found in this research.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter has examined the methods used for this research. In the chapter I substantiated my decision to use qualitative research methods and described the data collection and analysis processes I engaged in to address my research questions. The chapter showed why I decided to use to use qualitative research methods for my study. It also showed how I selected and collected data from the research participants. It also outlined how I analyzed the data and the steps I took to ensure the integrity of my interpretations through the use of member checks. The next chapter focuses on the results of the research. It draws on the data to answer the research questions that guided the research.
CHAPTER 4: THE WORK LIVES OF PARTICIPANTS

Liminality is one of the main conceptual frameworks used in this study as a means of categorizing grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations. It is used in this study as a means to understand the status of this group of workers and how this status influences their decision making processes particularly with regards to their organizational identification. It is therefore imperative that before answering the research questions guiding this study, I contextualized them as liminal beings within their organizations based on what the data from my interviews with them show. Framing the positions of grant-funded employees through the lenses of liminality will bring clarity to our understanding of how this group of workers negotiates their organizational identifications and the underpinning meanings they ascribe to them.

The framing of grant-funded employees as liminal workers in chapter 2 of this dissertation was informed by my personal observation of grant-funded employees and the extant literature on how liminalities are performed in organizations. The literature on liminality of workers that I drew on was largely focused on transient or temporal workers and how they fit into organizations (Garsten, 1999). Liminality as noted by Turner (1967), is the situation in which an individual is caught between two positions and sharing some of the characteristics of both positions. It is a position between being and becoming placing people in a position of uncertainty and lack of clearly defined identity. However, unlike the rites of passage used by Turner (1967) to illustrate the concept of liminality the liminal positions of grant-funded employees in this study is more cyclical in nature. The rites of passage for the Ndembu people are for a specified periods of time.
and then they transition into the next stage of life. The emotionality associated with being in a liminal position is therefore continuous among the participants in this study and this again is reflected in how they negotiate their identifications.

The conceptual framing of grant-funded employees at the beginning of this study was also mostly based on the natures of the grants that fund their positions. It was largely constructed around the perception that the temporal nature of grants does not help in clearly defining the positions of grant-funded employees. Using the lenses of liminality to examine the data is therefore a way to understand how liminality is manifested in other situations other than just being restricted to the temporality associated with grant funding.

However, to dig deeper into the different faces of liminality it is important to look at the working lives of the participants in this study. The chapter examines closely the work lives of five of the participants and how their descriptions of their work lives show the multiple facets of liminality in nonprofit organizations. These stories describe how the participants came to work in their current organizations as well as their roles. These sample stories also illuminate our understanding of the concept of liminality and how it affects these grant-funded employees. I chose to focus on these five participants because their work stories provide rich narratives and also because their stories exemplify the stories of the 11 other participants in this study (For synopsis of the backgrounds of all the research participants see Appendix C).

The Work Life of Martha

Martha is a woman in her early 30s. After trying several times to arrange an interview with her I finally got the chance to interview her in her small windowless office
which she shares with two other staff members. The organization that Martha works for is called Breaking the Cycle, a program affiliated with a university. Breaking the Cycle helps young people from low income families by working with them to eliminate the stumbling blocks to their academic success. They accomplish this goal mainly by providing an after school programming for children. Martha described Breaking the Cycle as follows “we are an afterschool program, what we do is we serve children that are at risk academically and financially, so 99% of my children qualify for free or reduced lunch rates.” Breaking the Cycle is therefore dedicated to working with young people living at or below poverty rates to overcome their challenges to be successful academically. Martha’s description of the services they provide show that Breaking the Cycle is very important in the lives of many of the children they serve due to the endemic poverty that some of them were subjected to. “Our biggest thing is the intervention programs” said Martha “a lot of people think we are a homework program we are not; we are intervention.” Martha wanted to clarify her program by explicitly explaining what they do.

I asked Martha about her motivation for choosing her line of work. “When I graduated from college in 1999” she answered “I went to into teaching and taught preschoolers then I decided that I wanted to go more into administration, so this job opened and I applied for it and go the position. I have been working here it will be four years in a couple of months.” Before joining Breaking the Cycle, Martha said she worked with an organization another organization as a preschool teacher “I worked for Headstart and I got laid-off there.” Breaking the Cycle was therefore offered her the opportunity to
be an administrator. She had been working as an administrator for almost four years when I interviewed her.

Another reason given by Martha for doing the work she does was to help low income people. Later on in the interview she said “poverty is a big thing.... It is where my heart is, so that these kids, I want them to have a life that I had and my staff had....” Martha was worried about the poverty stricken conditions of the children in her program and saw her work as opportunity to do something about it.

It was also noteworthy that Martha claimed that her professional philosophy fits in well with that of Breaking the Cycle. She said “when I graduated (from college) we had to do a philosophy statement of our own. And so my philosophy fits right into Breaking the Cycle philosophy.” By doing her current job, Martha therefore seemed to be fulfilling a lifelong goal of working with an organization like Breaking the Cycle that focuses on low income children.

Martha occupies a supervisory role in Breaking the Cycle. She described her position and role as follows:

Well my title is program coordinator, so I oversee the High Art School District which are both grade schools within the district. I have a staff of about 30 combined and about 60 students right now. The 30 staff is not all there every day and they are part-time employees. Where I am, I am the only fulltime employee within that grant. I have two site coordinators that work 4 hours a day and under them there are team leaders which is 2 ½ hours who oversee the children. The site
coordinators oversee the day to day activities they call the parents and work with the staff and handling issues like a principal.

As a coordinator, Martha supervises a group of people who do most of the day to day activities with the kids in the school. She ensure that these people are doing their best to help the kids in their care are fed and taught.

**Martha’s Experience of Liminality**

The work life of Martha as a grant-funded employee exemplifies the liminal positions occupied by this group of workers in nonprofit organizations. A few minutes into my interview with her the issue of the temporal nature of grants and its effect on workers came up. When I asked her if she had experienced a feeling of not being sure about the security of her job, Martha laughed and replied “I have before I came here. Just like any grant-funded positions that we can come in tomorrow and the money will be gone.” She said “anytime you work in a grant-funded position you have to be willing to get rid of and hope it comes back.”

Martha described her loss of her previous job as “hard.” “What was hard is that” she said “the lady, who like I said took my job, she had a director’s position where I was just a mentor, so she took a tremendous pay cut to take my position.” She felt unfairly treated because the director got her position because of her seniority and not because she was qualified for the job. The use of seniority to determine who gets laid-off first in an organization during financial crisis was therefore of concern to Martha, “I think seniority has its pluses and minuses” she concluded.
Martha’s liminality in her workplace was not only limited to the temporal nature of position as a grant-funded employee, it also had to do with her program being part of a larger organization. As a program associated with a university, Martha indicated feeling out of place. While her program focuses on children they are considered to be part of an institution of higher learning. This seems to affect the way Martha negotiate her identification. This is because she belonged to both a larger institution and a smaller one at the same time. But the larger institution which is her other employer, she felt does not accord her and her program its requisite status. As far as she was concerned her program and her staff are “outsiders. We are the step-children of the college. Absolutely, we know that, they know that, it is just, because we are not able to give them any amount of dollars, so they just, we are totally outsiders.” Martha seems to negotiate her identification based on this arrangement of not feeling that she has been fully accepted by her other employer. On the other hand, there were the school districts that Martha works with that were the primary executioners of the grants and on the other is the university that provides space for her program. As an employee therefore Martha seems caught between her program the university and the school districts.

Martha’s background gives us some insight about liminal the positions of some grant-funded employees. Having experienced lay- off in her previous job and her recent budget cuts create a certain level of uncertainty for her. The major source of liminality could be attributed to being “housed” in a bigger institution while working on a small program that takes her out of her main organization which is the college. Being torn between her program and the college, she chooses to identify more with her program
because how involved she was with it but this does not nullify the fact that she is also a staff of the college that pays her benefits and also provides her with an office space.

The intensity of Martha’s liminality can also be inferred from her fond memories of her previous job. “I will go back in a heartbeat if the grant could fund it” she said of her previous job “I believe in that company. That is the best organization I have ever worked for. They believe in their employees, they treat them right and it was just like we were one big family. I still keep in contact with some of those people.” The nostalgic feelings expressed by Martha four years after leaving that organization gives us a sense of how uncomfortable she was in her current position. Having described the way her job was given to someone else as “unfair” and “hard” one would think that she will be ready to move on and forget about that experience, but its seems not to be the case. Her current circumstance sandwiched between institutions with each of them not giving her full membership was causing problems for her.

The new dean in the department that Martha was affiliated with had begun to show some signs of interest in the work she does. Although she was appreciative of this move:

We have a Dean who is trying everything in his power to try and connect Breaking the Cycle to the rest of the university. It is the first time since I have been here that this has happened. Like he knows that Breaking the Cycle is an important organization. Actually he has just scheduled two days to get out to my sites, which is something that has never happened before. So he sees that we need
him so he is working very well, Breaking the Cycle is on top of his radar whereas it has never happened before. He is a great Dean. It is a good difference.

Martha is very excited about the overtures of the new Dean in her department to work with her on her program. Her emphasis on the fact that this had “never happened before” bring to the fore one of the causes of frustration in her program, that of being neglected by her department, the “step-children” syndrome. The lack of recognition and support was ultimately causing her to lose interest in her job. Later on in the interview Martha was not still convinced that things will change that much “they are higher education and we are lower education. There is really nothing they can do. I think he is really doing all that he can.” The experience of Martha as a liminal being tells us a lot about it means to be placed in a position whereby you cannot fully identify with your stakeholders. Although she is a member of the department, she uses the pronoun “they” to refer to the department while using “we” to show her strong identification with her program.

The point here is that liminality compelled her to detach herself from one identification target to be attached to another identification target. She could not however shed her identity as an employee of the university because of the strings from the university that is sustaining her employment.

The Work Life of Mavis

Mavis is a woman in her 20’s. I drove about 45 minutes to her organization to recruit participants for this study. When I got there the place was very quiet apparently their organization was having a retreat somewhere else and Mavis was the only one who had come back to the office to lock it up. Fortunately, someone had told her about my
study and she was eager to talk to me about her experiences. We scheduled a time and met at a popular coffee shop in Coolstone for the interview.

Mavis works for environmental nonprofit organization Earth Care. She had been a Vista volunteer/ worker with the organization and seemed relieved to have been offered a full-time position. She described her rapid move to a fulltime position as follows:

I have been working with them just over a year. I started as a Vista volunteer, Americorps. I finished in June and was hired in mid-July as a part-time person, 25 hours a week. And they weren’t used to me being part-time, so I did one week of part-time and I was like, ‘I can’t get all this stuff done that you want done, you have to realize that I am part-time now.’ And they were like ‘no you are going to be fulltime.’ So I came in thinking it will be a part-time position, and it ended up being fulltime pretty much immediately. So it has been a few weeks now as an employee.

She told this story with a sense of pride that she has been able to get a fulltime job with the organization that she wanted to work with. Her decision to engage in the type of work she does, she said was partly influence by the college she attended “I went to Devoted college in Chicago, so I had a lot of professors that were interested in nonprofit work and interested in social change.” Being able to work on issues of social justice seems to fit right into the kind of job she wanted to do. She had earlier been recruited by some organizations:

Because I applied for few jobs I did not have kind of interviews come back to me. There was one in particular that was a private global sensing company, a private
remote sensing company in St. Louis Missouri and so they wanted me to be a photogrammetric trainer, which is training people how to use imagery and they did a lot of defense contracting and they could not tell me much about the company. They were like ‘this is confidential materials and you need to have security clearance.’ So they were like ‘we cannot really tell you this and we cannot really tell you that.’ You know I had two interviews with them by phone and they invited me down, didn’t go. At the same time Earth Care had called me and said, ‘do you want to do this Americorps thing?’ because I also applied for that. And so I was like yeah! I was like I don’t know if I can do the defense contracting stuff. I am a very open person. I don’t want to be like I cannot talk about this.”

Mavis’ decision to work with Earth Care was therefore motivated by several factors. But the most significant factor seems to be her desire to work in an organization that was comfortable with. Another reason she gave for joining Earth Care was “I love helping people. I’ll do whatever people want, whatever is right for them.”

“My title is Sustainable Forestry Landowner Outreach and Education Associate” said Mavis, “there are a lot of different programs that that are kind of, coming to me right now. When I was first hired my two main duties were one to provide administrative services for the Ohio Forestry Cooperative…then my other job was a carbon trading program.” Mavis described her job as working with people within the immediate location of her organization and with organizations from other states that are also working on the carbon trading program. As part of her work Mavis said she works with the landowners
by providing administrative support and with the coalition by helping to write and implement grant stipulations. Communication was therefore a key part of Mavis’ work.

*Mavis’ Experience of Liminality*

As our conversation moved towards grants Mavis declared “when I first heard about your project I thought to myself ‘grant-funded is a scary position to be in’….it is scary, I don’t know what the future is going to hold, I don’t know, there is pressure to get more grants. At least once a month if not more than that, I am looking at grants.gov to see if there is anything on forestry; looking at private foundation websites, I mean there is, I know it is a little scary….” When I asked her about what it means for her to be a grant-funded employee, she replied “it means I have no idea what my job security is.” Even having a “half- million dollar multi-year grant” gives her “just a little bit of security” she opined. Mavis’ expression of fear for her job shows how vulnerable she is being in a liminal position between temporary and fulltime positions. She is by all purposes considered a full-time employee both by herself and her employer. But she has come to understand that full-time does not mean a guarantee of a job and herein lays her fear. The security of her job is dependent on continual securing of funding. There is hence a perpetual movement towards the goal of achieving job security.

Mavis’ fear of losing her job was also intensified by the threat of possible closure of Earth Care as a whole due to financial difficulties. She had heard that Earth Care had contemplated “closing its doors” was not sure if the organization will get back to that point again. The issue of insecurity of jobs and its liminal implications is not only an individual issue but that of whole organizations as well. In this case Earth Care had had
setbacks in its fund raising and this had threatened its very existence. The fear expressed by Mavis was therefore borne not just out of the fear of losing her grant but also the possibility of being laid-off because the organization as a whole decides to shut down. The environment created by position of nonprofit organization is thus critical in the statuses of grant-funded employees. The uncertainty of the survival of the organization seemed to have intensified the fear of Mavis as a liminal worker.

Mavis described another factor that made her feel more liminal, the differences between organization's mission and the everyday organizational activities. For Martha in the above discussion part of her liminality stemmed from being accountable to multiple organizations, in the case of Mavis it was about internal conflict with regards to whether she is doing the right thing. Throughout my interview with her she was very reflective of her role in the organization and how much she was contributing towards alleviating poverty: “Sometimes I don’t think their mission and actual work align with each other. Like this Co-op stuff we work with, the majority of them are retired professors, doctors … I feel like they don’t need as much help as other people in the community…. So a lot of times I ask myself ‘who are we servicing in my particular program?’” Mavis’ internal conflict is the result of the position some organizations are forced into, that is, depending on multiple grants that threaten to veer them away from their stated mission and goals. Mavis here was questioning whether her job helping to serve “the unemployed, underemployed or under poverty people” in the county served by Earth Care. She felt her work was mostly geared towards helping people who do not need help thus taking her
away from those who do need a lot of help. But the reality was that the cooperative she works for pays part of her salary.

The liminal positions occupied by Mavis show that liminality must not only be construed in terms of only temporal-permanent dynamics. Earth Care’s missions, goals and activities seemed to have created uncertainty due to their lack of congruency with each other and this seemed to have placed Mavis in a liminal position. She explained that her primary motivation for joining the organization was to “help people” but the question was what kind of people? Finding herself in a state of “helping people” who do not seem to need help because of their financial statuses was causing Mavis to pause and reflect on the full meaning of her work. Earth Care was definitely doing all that it could to keep her doors opened. This means looking for funding from all sorts of places to sustain their programs.

The constant quest for funding as expressed by many in this study sometimes place grant-funded employees in liminal positions as was the case of Mavis. Although many of the participants indicated that they look at their missions and goals carefully before applying for a grant, it is not a guarantee that the grant will always help them to stay true to their missions and goals and this could lead to frustration and the questioning of the identity of the workers. Mavis was obviously struggling with who she was as a nonprofit worker based on what her work means to the people she wanted to serve “I think there are other programs that do more outreach to people who are impoverished or low income” she said and although this is her passion her current position was not allowing her to fulfill this mission.
The Work Life of Joana

Joana was a young woman who had just graduated from college. She said she graduated a year early so she wanted to stay closer to her college while serving the community. She therefore decided to become a Vista volunteer and was posted to a community action agency. Vista volunteers are a group of young people who are trained and posted to different locations by the Corporation for Community Service. Their main mandate is to serve for a year or two after which they receive an education award. Joana said she was interested in going to Law School; Vista was therefore an opportunity to do some good and prepare her for her future career.

Joana did not seem to know much about the organization. She was also very frank about how little she knew about the nonprofit sector before she was posted to the community action agency:

I have been working here for a few months. I interviewed for several Americorps positions and I sought an Americorps position in this region, this county because I wanted to stick around. I had graduated earlier so I had friends here. But I also wanted to give back to the community what I got from the 3 years I spent at school and the 3 years I had spent here. I wanted an equal contribution to the community as I did going to school.

When I interviewed for my Vista position, I liked the interviewer here, she is my supervisors I just liked her. And I was particularly attracted to this position for several reasons. One of which was that it seems that I will have a lot of autonomy in terms of bringing to table things that I thought were important and kind of
generating my own projects. And it was something that I had no previous experience. I did not know anything about transportation I had not worked in an office I didn’t know anything about nonprofit and how they work, so that was all attractive to me. 

Joana was partly attracted to the organization she was working for because of her immediate supervisor and her desire to be given the freedom to develop her skills to help the organization. As vista volunteer she receives $200 a month stipend and her role was to work with the organization’s transportation department. “I did small office things for her (supervisor),” she explained “because of the gap I did cool things, I wrote ticketing policies and communicated with other transportation organizations. I have had some experience that I will not otherwise have. The vista position is special because it allows them to fill the gap.” Joana described her job as helping to ensure that smooth running of the transportation department. Since getting the position she had work to help restructure the department by streamlining their operations.

Joana’s Experience of Liminality

Turner (1967) described liminal beings as “sucklings” that are neither too young nor fully grown. They are in a state of development. Joana was still transitioning between being a student and a nonprofit worker. She was still living in the college town where she went to college but could not fully joined the all night parties like she used to do “I cannot go to the bars like my friends, because I have to be at work at 8AM” she said “it is good for me to be around people who are career oriented.” As a young graduate she feels a little out of place in the organization “I am 21” she said “and most people in this
building have families and careers. That is why I am not necessarily feeling like I am part of this organization.” Age differences were definitely an issue for Joana. She felt like now that she was in the organization as a worker she had to behave in a particular way to show her maturity but clearly she was not all that ready for that total transition. She was therefore suspended between being a student and an adult trying to find her way in the working world.

The metaphor of a “suckling” can also be applied to the evolution of the Joana’s ideology. At the time of my first interview with her, she was clearly struggling to come to term with the role of government and nonprofits in the lives of people. She was worried about people taking advantage of the services they were being offered and wondering why the government should be giving grants to nonprofits to provide these services. She was therefore caught between the need to help people and how far nonprofits need to go to accomplish that goal. She asked a series of rhetorical questions “do I feel comfortable with the services they are providing? Do I feel comfortable with the services they are providing me?” These rhetorical question and other statements made by Joana, reflected her budding ideas about the whole system of grant making and services provided by nonprofit organizations. She was caught between wanting to do “domestic service” and “giving back to the community” but did not know how far she or others need to go to accomplish these goals.

Joana seemed to be still working through what it means for her to be working with a nonprofit organization. She felt she owed me an apology for her lack of conviction in her answers to my questions. “Sorry” she said “I feel like I am talking a lot about
maybe, usually, kind of, partially. I feel my views are still under construction.” As a new employee she was clearly struggling to come to terms with her new environment, what the organization does and her role in it.

Joana uncertainty about her relationship with her host organization also exemplified the liminal state she found herself. “I don’t necessarily feel part of this organization, partially because I have not been here for this long” she said, “I don’t think I completely belong here;” “I am a Vista; I am a Vista no ifs about that and that is something that I am definitely proud of.” These statements underscore the liminal position that Joana found herself in and that ultimately influenced her organizational identification processes. Joana knew that her work with the community action agency was temporary and just like any other Vista position she could spend at most two years with the organization. However, unlike Martha and Mavis, her liminality was not necessarily caused by the temporal nature of her appointment it stemmed from her lack of understanding of how the nonprofit sector works and that the fact that she was answerable to two different entities, the one that facilitating her volunteer work and the other that employed her.

The story of Joana illustrates the other means by which grant-funded employees are placed in liminal positions. In this case the liminality stemmed from age differences and the evolution of ideology about the role of nonprofit organizations. Age, experience and ideological standing all seemed to have placed Joana in a position of uncertainty about her standing with the organization. She no longer saw herself as a student nor a full fledge organizational member. This was reflected in her responses to my questions. As
ubiquitous as nonprofits organizations some have little idea of how this whole grant idea works.

A few months after interviewing Joana, I called her for a member check interview. I told her about the conclusions that I had drawn from my initial interview with her as well as the general conclusion I had reached on my interviews with other participants. She agreed with my interpretations of her statements but indicated that some changes that had taken place since our initial interview. She said she now identifies more with the community action agency she was working with and feels like she was now part of the organization. When I asked about the reason for the shift in identification, she said having spent more time with the people in the organization she thinks she now understands the organization better and feels welcomed there. She was however still a Vista and still owed some allegiance to the organization that posted to the community action agency in the first place.

The Work Life of Mary

Mary works with a community action agency that has been known for several decades as the provider of health and other services to the community. The organization set up a health clinic for the community a few years ago and really prides itself in this service and the numerous other services that they provide to support the community. I interviewed Mary in her office. The office was a little congested but well organized. After I explained the Consent Form to her she signed it and made a copy for her files before we started the interview.
“It will be six years next April” Mary said about how long she had worked with the community action agency “prior to working here I lived in another county where I worked with a community action agency. I also worked with Jobs and Families Services. So I have always been in this area, where I work to help the public. That is just what I want to be able to do.” Mary said she has always been in the business of helping communities and when she saw a job opening with her current employer she applied for the position and got it.

Mary was the “housing coordinator” she said “so anything that has to do with housing, I am kind of over that. So I write the grants, I do the reporting for the grants and make sure that the draw downs are completed; all the reports are completed, but I have to make sure that any of the work that is completed is done correctly as far as the construction, repairs. So I am kind of overseeing anything that has to do with housing…. I am the paper pusher of the housing department.” She is in charge of all the administrative work that needed to be done as well as going to the field to make sure that the work is done properly. Her emphasis on correctness came across as someone who pays close attention to details and this was evident in her well organized office.

Mary’s Experience of Liminality

The issue of grants and their impact on her organization was one of the main focuses of our interview. Mary reported that “I am always looking for funding. Anytime we go anywhere in these kinds of trainings and I meet other people from other organizations, you know, I talk to them about funding.” She seemed very much focused on how to sustain her program financially. At the time of the interview, Mary was not
sure what was going to happen to her and two of the other grant-funded employees who work in her department. “So a lot of the funding we had in the past we were not able to obtain” she said “So right now the one of the funding that we have ends in December. We do not know if we will get more funding. So we are to the point where we are very limited on funding and if we are not able to do something… there is only three people in our department and it could lead to a lay-off.” Mary was definitely very worried about the possibility of laying her limited staff off due to lack of funding. She was in a state of limbo not knowing what will happen since at the time of interviewing her she had just a few more weeks for the cycle of the grant she referred to end. Her position could therefore be seen as liminal in that once she obtains funding her employment and those of her colleagues will continue. It was not like the organization did not want to work with them anymore it was just due to lack of funding.

The liminal position that Mary found herself in brought to the fore the issue of high turnover rates in her department. She claimed that “there is a very big turnover with nonprofit because of the grant funding… so you hire people for two years, they know they are going to get laid-off at that point… so there is a turnover because people are looking for programs or jobs that are going to be more stable.” Mary seems to ride the waves of liminality that comes with her job this is because she did not give any indication about looking for “more stable job” in the face of her current budget predicament.

Another significant point that was raised by Mary that is relevant to our understanding of how grants affect the decision making processes and hence organizational identification of grant-funded employees is the differences that exist
within organizations with regards to grant funding. Her department relies on competitive grants while other programs rely on noncompetitive but variable grants to support their departments. Mary discussed some of the differences between the various grants that are used by her program:

Some of the grants are not competitive. Some of the grants like weatherization program it is just a state funded program and they are going to get their grants every year, it does not matter. The amount is different. A few of the grants here are like that. But there are a few of us like housing that is totally competitive and if we don’t get the grants we don’t have the funding.

Working in an organization with multiple grant sources creates tension among employees. As far as Mary was concerned “housing is expendable, they can get rid of us because they can’t pay us.” This not the case with other programs that were pretty much assured of their grants that are also subject to cuts. In this case we see how the organization as a whole dealing with two extreme cases, having a lot of funding on one hand due to the green initiative by the government and no funding to sustain its other departments. The organization had to balance the disparities between the funding available to its various programs. And for employees like Mary, this situation is unfair since they are all members of the same organization.

The story of Mary underscores the significance of grants and grant cycles in the lives of employees and organizations as a whole. This is because they affect the statuses of employees thereby influencing their decision making processes. In this case we see Mary struggling to keep the doors of her department opened. As an employee of an
agency with multiple grants and grant cycles she could not share the experiences of other programs within the organization who have more resources because her department was struggling financially. The disparity in resource allocations in nonprofit organizations place employees in awkward positions. Similar case by Chelsea and Steven from Step Up whose organization was struggling to let its employees know that they are all equal within the organization. Francis tries to make sure that the pay and benefits are based on a scale rather than type of grants. Compared to other programs that are assured of some funding, Mary in this case felt she was always in search of grants to support her program and she definitely did not like being in that kind of position.

The Work Life of John

John is a supervisor in a community action agency; Pulling Together. He had been working in the organization for 14 months in his current job. In addition to doing this fulltime job John was also pursuing a Ph.D. in geography. “I have been working for this organization for 14 months” John told me “before starting to work here I was actually on the board of directors for this organization. My father used to work here so I kind of grew up in this organization.” John’s work with Pulling Together seems to have started longtime before he took his current job. As far as John was concerned “being a member of this organization is family. Part of it is that, obviously because I grew up here. But it is also an atmosphere that I try to foster in my division and that I perceive exist not only in this organization but in the board structure.” The ease with which John talked about Pulling Together definitely showed how much time he knew about the organization having practically his whole life affiliated with it.
Pulling Together according to John helps to “provide a unified voice for region which is our 17 member agencies in 30 counties in this part of the Midwest. And some direct service work in improving the lives of folks in this region. A couple of our primary focus is on children and the elderly.” The organization does advocacy, sub-grantee and offers training programs to community action agencies that they represent. John is in charge of the housing division of the organization.

I have a couple of prominent roles. Number one, I administer quite a number of grant funding for both this organization and our 17 member agencies. I am responsible for about $33 million annual budget and that is split over a lot of different programs. But the other role that I have in this organization is generation of funds and that is both grant funding and then some kind of for-profit side generation of unrestricted money so we can use for corporate needs.

John’s program provides services for low income home owners. Some of the services they offer include weatherizing people’s homes as part of the green initiative by the government. The $33 million budget was a jump from $11 million which was his budget at the beginning of his tenure but thanks to the government’s green initiative his budget has tripled.

In spite of the huge budget and familiarity with the organizations, John showed a little uneasiness about the status quo. He wanted some things to change. He was happy about the fact the government green initiative had led to a windfall of grants for his department to work on weatherization projects, but at the same time he was keenly aware of the fact that this funds could dry up anytime. “We have not had to lay any one off. It is
a very good time to be in this particular business.” He told me “there is has never been this kind of money in this business. If you come back and did this interview in 17 months I may have a different answer for you.” Like Martha and Mavis, John used the word “scary” to describe the possibility of losing his grant funding.

John was conscious of the fact that grants are temporal and in the next few months or years he will likely see a decrease in funding. The suspension between what other participants Karla and Stephen called “ebb and flow” influence the decision making processes of grant-funded employees. A grant-funded employee cannot rest on his/her laurels in times of increase in funding. The pendulum of grant funding is always hanging in a balance and checking the enthusiasm of grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations. John was clearly caught in a liminal position between an abundance of funding and the real possibility of losing much of these funding in the near future. This liminal position ultimately influences his relationships with the identification targets within Pulling Together, namely his relationships with grantors and board of directors.

As an administrator in a nonprofit organization with an experience in the for-profit sector John indicated another tension John seems to be experiencing tension within himself because of the modus operandi of those two different worlds. “Grants are restrictive” he said” you do what the grant allows you to do. It is not real easy to build new business ventures with grant-funding; so generating the unrestricted funding is the way to go”. John wanted to set up a social enterprise to fulfill his “other role” as a fund raiser. “In a for-profit organization” he argued “a decision is made and implemented seamlessly, whereas once you make a decision in a grant-funded environment it takes
awhile to get a buy in from all interested parties before you can actually move forward on implementing any changes.” The structure of the organization was definitely in the way of John and he blamed the board structure for being “complicated.” These complications stemmed from the fact that members of the board were also agencies in the Pull Together coalition and as John said “their desires don’t always align so it is difficult to get the needed support to move in the direction you want to move’.” The board was “averse to risk” and most of them wanted to stay with the traditional means of raising funds to support projects and this was the source of frustration for John.

John’s seemed to be torn between how best to proceed looking at the two different models that he was familiar with. As a nonprofit worker did not have the structures to make decisions and implement them like he would in a for-profit organization. At the same time he had this nagging fear that if he did not do anything, Pulling Together will continue to be rendered vulnerable by its dependence on grants. The desire to stay true to the values of the nonprofit sector ultimately seems to have placed John in liminal position between for-profit values and nonprofit values.

In the interview John indicated that he does worry about the security of his job. He does not therefore share the liminal positions that lower level or other grant-funded employees share. This is mainly because of the array of grants he could draw upon to sustain his position. The source of his liminality as a grant-funded employee is thus different from other because of his position with the organization. John exemplifies the pattern that was apparent in the data. Those grant-funded employees who were tenured or hold middle and managerial positions did not show indicate the job vulnerability
associated with being grant-funded employees. Their experiences of liminality were mostly based on structural and other factors within and outside their organizations.

Chapter Summary

As the stories of the five participants reviewed her show, liminality can be considered beyond the scope of temporary and permanent work arrangements. Philosophical leanings, the nature of the organizational structure as well as the experiences of the individual all define the liminal positions of the participants in this study. By choice of these five participants was therefore to give illustrate how liminality is manifested in different facets of the organizational lives of the participants. These stories underscore the complex nature of liminality and its role in the lives of these participants.

Understanding the liminal positions of participants in this study helps us to understand how it influences the way they negotiate their organizational identification. It helps us to understand why they choose to associate with one entity as against other entities. For instance, by examining grant-funded employees through the lenses of liminality helps us to understand the role of uncertainty in the process of organizational identification negotiation.

In the next chapter I answer the research questions that guided this study. It is important to be cognizant of the fact that negotiations of the organizational identification of the participants were largely influenced by the liminal positions they occupied within their organizations. Although the chapter focuses on answering the identification
questions and their meanings, I also discuss explicitly how liminality factors into the identification process.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

This research was designed to find out what grant-funded employees in nonprofits identify with vis-à-vis the temporal nature of grants. The aim was to find out from multiple people working on multiple projects in different organizations how working on grant-funded projects influences their relationships with their organization and other stakeholders. Grants are impermanent funding sources tailored towards specific projects (Ott & Shafritz 1986). There are multiple identification targets in organizations and these targets are identified with by employees based on several factors, such as common values and the status of the employee (Larson & Pepper, 2003; Gossett, 2002). The issue that prompted the research was therefore, how these multiple grants sources coupled with their temporal natures affect the organizational identification of grant-funded employees and what these identifications mean to them. The questions that guided the research were therefore framed to examine how grant-funded employees describe their identification with the stakeholders in their organization and what these identifications mean to them.

The research uses an inductive analytic process to answer the research questions. This involves open coding and discourse analysis of the data from the participants to answer the research questions. The first steps in the analysis involved a discourse analysis for that examined the use of the assumed and transcendent “we” and self-labels. The other steps involved the analysis of themes that were direct responses to the questions.

The results of the research in this chapter followed the analysis steps outlined in the method section. I analyzed the data to answer each of the research questions following the three steps of examining the use of the assumed or transcendent “we”; the
Results for Research Question One

The first research questions sought to find out how grant-funded employees describe their identification with their organizations and what these descriptions mean to them. Organizational identification is expressed in multiple ways. An employee’s means of indicating identification with a particular target could be expressed by including him/herself in the actions of the organization through the use of what Cheney (1983) calls an “assumed/transcendent we” to show oneness with the organization. The use of self-labels to describe how the employees see the organization or what the organization embodies is another indication of the level of identification between the employee and the identification target (Gioia, 1998). The descriptions of the participants in the research demonstrate a wide range of identity descriptions that are shown by grant-funded employees. Within these descriptions we see those who strongly identified with their organizations and those who are still struggling to come to terms with their identity in their organizations.

Cheney (1983), building on the concept of identification by Kenneth Burke, argues that the use of “we” when referring to an organization indicates that the “sharing of interests by the corporation and the employee seems taken for granted” (p.149). The assumed “we” is also a means to examine what the organization does as well as its relationships with other stakeholders. By including themselves in these activities and
relationships the members show that they are not just members of the organization but are active participants in its activities.

Examining the Assumed “We”

The research participants for this project used the assumed “we” to indicate their inclusion in their organization’s activities and dealings with their stakeholders. The table below shows a breakdown of the categories that emerged as participants talked about their organizations. The table shows the number of times participants used the assumed or transcendent “we” as a referent to their identification with various identification targets. It also shows the examples drawn from individual participants to substantiate their identifications and what they mean to them.

I first summarize all the references of the use of the assumed/transcendent we by the participants in Table 2 when talking about their organizations and other organizational identification targets. I then draw on the sections within the table for further analysis to answer each of the research questions. This organizational structure was prompted by the fact that most of the use of the assumed/transcendent “we” by participants were made in reference to their associations with their organizations as they discuss themes related to other identification targets. The table shows how participants used the assumed and the transcendent “we” as an indication of their identification with particular entities within and outside their organizations. My analysis of this use of “we” showed a disproportionately more use of the pronoun by the participants when talking about activities within their organizations that they were involved in. The use of the “we” also delineated what the participants were involved in with their organizations. An
examination of the collective use of the “we” therefore showed the level of identification
with their organizations by the participants as they deal with programmatic and
stakeholders associated with their organizations. The table below is a diagrammatic
representation to show the different aspects and the involvements of the participants in
their organizations.
Table 2

*Open Coding Categories of the Use of the Assumed “we” by Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Number of Times Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When talking about organizations mission and goals</td>
<td>“…what we are trying to do here is give people a means of self sufficiency and a little bit of pride in their situational and that is what I feel is really what we should be and what we are doing”</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When talking about organization’s crises and responses to them</td>
<td>“This budget round we were at the mercy of the legislature… it was a blood bath”</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. When talking about organization’s activities and actions</td>
<td>“We do foreclosure mitigation to help people from going into foreclosure if they are having problems we try to help them to work through the program so they don’t get to that point”</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When referring to individual programs or projects other groups other than the whole organization</td>
<td>“We work with them (the umbrella organization) for the summer day camp to have youth come in and learn about the watershed and the environment”.</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When talking about organizational structure</td>
<td>“We have a customer service that respond to the people’s needs that we respond to complaints”</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. When talking about the community and beneficiaries of their services</td>
<td>“We struggle in this part of the state”</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. When talking about the organization’s relationships with other organizations and other stakeholders</td>
<td>“We know we all need to succeed if we succeed and the others don’t succeed then the programs as a whole will not succeed”</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When talking about grants and relationships with funders</td>
<td>“We had been told to prepare for a cut back but when it came, we were told it was 100% cut”.</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Talking about Organizations Mission and Goals:

All the participants indicated used the assumed “we” when talking about the mission and goals of their organization or programs. These were in the responses to the interview question about the mission and goals of their organizations. In describing his program’s goal for the stakeholders in his program one participant declared, “we want them to think outside the box” (Jesse). This was, for instance, an indication of how he aligned himself to the goal of getting the beneficiaries of his program to be creative in dealing with environmental issues.

When talking about the Organization’s Crises and Responses to them:

The issue of crisis came up a lot in the data. All the participants discussed the problems their organizations face and how they go about handling them. By using the assumed “we” the participants did not seek to separate themselves to challenges and responses of their organization. This is a strong indication of how much they do identify with their organizations. For instance, when bemoaning the loss of funds for the services that his organization used to offer one participant showed the impact of the crisis on him, “we” he said “can’t take care of the little old ladies like we used to” (Francis). The loss of the funding stream to meet the needs of a segment of the organization’s beneficiaries had clearly affected him.

When talking about Organization’s Activities and Actions:

The participants in the research also showed their identification with their organizations and programs by including themselves in the activities that are undertaken by their organizations. The close relationships between the organization and its members
was evident in well they seemed to have worked together to transform the organization into a regional economic incubator. Kate, a director of a community based organization described how close she is to her organization:

I mean this organization has changed a lot. We went from being worker owned network from 1985-93 and then expanded our vision in 93 to become Jancot Network and to be a much more regional organization.

In describing the changes that have taken place in her organization, Kate started with using the word “this” to describe the organization to the assumed “we” to show how much she has been part of the growth of the organization. By using “we” Kate aimed to indicate that she was instrumental in shaping the current position of the organization. There is therefore a sense of pride and ownership in the evolution process the organization has gone through. The strong identification between Kate and Jancot Network continued throughout the interview as she took every opportunity to show how involved she was with both the decisions making and the process of advancing the organization and region within which it located.

*When talking about the Organization’s Structure:*

The discussion of the structure of an organization is one means by which people indicate their level of identification with that organization. Through their descriptions of their organizational structures participants indicated how closely they identify with their organizations. Martha talked about her program’s structure in this way:

We have three rotations that we circle the children through and one is the intervention piece of it and they are in there for 30 minutes. And the other part is
homework and they are there for 30 minutes. And then the enrichment and they
do different activities. We have two certified teachers and one community
member that does the arts and crafts.

In her description of her programs structure, Martha made it a point to use the assumed
“we” as a means to show how closely she identifies with the structure that they have set
up for the program that she is part of.

*When Referring to Individual Programs or Projects rather than the whole Organization:*

A close examination of the data shows that the use of the assumed “we” was not
always an indication of identification with an umbrella organization under which some of
the participants works. The use of the assumed “we” was sometimes used by the
participants in a parochial sense to mean their particular project or program that they are
associated with within the larger organization. About 19% of the participants used the
assumed “we” parochially to indicate their identification with their specific project or
program. Take the case of Martha who bluntly declared:

“We are just housed here… we are totally an outsider. We are the step-
children of the college. Absolutely, we know that, it is just because we are
not able to give them any amount of dollars, so they just… we are totally
outsiders.

The repetitive use of the assumed “we” by Martha to emphasize the fact that her
organization is marginalized also indicates her strong identification with her organization.
The statement “we are the step-children of the college” is a sign of the little attention they
receive from the college. They seem insignificant in the scheme of things even though
they are considered college employees. This technicality of being a member of the larger organization does not negate the strong feelings that she has about her immediate organization. By stressing the “we” she creates two different sets of groups: the in-group which is her organization and the out-group which is the college. She shows her loyalty to her organization by describing the way the larger organization perceives and treats them.

Whenever Martha used “we” in the interview she did so to refer to her specific program and not the larger organization. She identified strongly with her program as opposed to the larger organization her program was part of. One reason for this distinction between the program and the organization was reflected in her statement and that is her program did not contribute any significant amount of money to the larger organization. The other reason is that she never spends a lot of time in the organization due to the nature of her work. As she puts it “I am only here twice a week. I spend a lot of my time on my site.” It is important to point out that even those who through their use of the assumed “we” indicated some distance with their organizations, they still showed their identification with their projects and their programs. That is, in spite of not feeling like full members of their organizations they still identify with the mission and goals of their organization and they attempt to fulfill these missions through their projects.

The participants use of the assumed “we” did not mean that they avoid using the pronoun “I” or other pronouns as they talk about their relationship with their organizations and other identification targets. My focus on the use of “we” was to find out how they include themselves in their organizations and other identification targets.
Identification with Organization through the Use of Self-Labels:

A reliance on the use of the assumed “we” was not the only way participants described their identification with their organizations. By focusing on the use of “we” one could miss the varied ways through which participants showed their identification or relationships with their organization. Identity self-labels also indicated the perceptions of the participants’ identification with their organizations.

*We are a Family:* The label of “family” was used by many of the participants to directly and indirectly describe what they like or disliked about their organizations. John, a middle level manager in a community development organization described his organization a family unit.

Actually that is a long story. I really care about what this organization does. My father used to work here. So I kind of grew up in this organization and I always wanted to come here so when I got opportunity, I decided to come back here….

Being a member of this organization is family. Part of it is that, obviously because I grew up here. But it is also an atmosphere that I try to foster in my division and that I perceive exist, not only here in this organization, but also in the board structure. There are some people who have been in this organization for 30 plus years. Thirty five years ago they were all making this up as they went along. It generates certain closeness. You sort of feel like you are all in it together and I think that carries over even to today.

John makes a connection between his department and the organization as a whole. His description could be construed as having a nucleus family within an extended family
system. The individuals within his department therefore have the benefit of a loving group of people who are interested in protecting their interest while they work to sustain the family. John portrayed strong identification with both his organization and the fellow employees by referring to his organization as a family. An organization that he cared about and was ready to do whatever it took to take care of everyone. This was understandable give the fact that the organization is a normative fit for John, having been around it all his life. His identification with the organization could be said to be a natural bond formed over the years.

It is important to point out that not all the participants had anticipatory vocational socialization into their organizations. In many instances, participants indicated that they joined the organization and then found them to be family niches. An example is that of Angela who found a home in her organization after she was employed:

It was definitely a family for me, I think of the ups and down of being a small nonprofits, you get close to whoever you are working with consider the kids in the program, my kids, a lot of ownership there and wanted to make sure they were taken care I know it was hard because who was going to take care of my kids making sure that they have the care that they need.

Also as a small organization you do butt heads with each other but you learn to get along and move on.

These participants’ descriptions of their organizations as families demonstrate that they feel close to their colleagues and that they can rely on them in case of any problem. The label of family also indicates a sense of belonging. They believe that they are members of
an organization that cares for them and will come through for them in times of trouble. These two quotations are filled with a sense of foreboding problem or danger. They all indicated the possibility and presence of problems. John’s observation of “being in it together” indicates that as “a family” they ride the waves of challenges and rewards together. Angela’s sense of challenges in her observation is even more pronounced in her opinion “the ups and downs of being a small nonprofit” in her opinions calls for the creation of a family unit to deal with the foreseen and unforeseen challenges that the organization and its people confront, which as discussed later in this chapter has to do with the insecurity associated with being grant-funded employees.

The sense of family and what it means for some of these participants were amplified by Irene, a young woman in her 20’s, who was working for a community development agency.

I identify with this organization in several different levels. With meals on wheels, I had volunteered and worked with them before, my grandmother getting meals on wheels, Headstart; HEAP, I have worked with HEAP and gotten assistance from HEAP. And the youth summer programs, I am familiar with them and see how the benefits affect the entire community all the way around.

It means a lot to me I am really excited to be here. I really believe in what they do I really believe in their missions and their goals. Awesome!

Irene indicated that as a child and also as an adult she had relied on the community development agency for survival. She goes on to say “they (the agency) actually helped putting me through school. It is my way of giving back to the community.” So as far as
Irene is concerned, her organization has been there not only as a source of employment but also as an advocate and supporter. The sense of an organization as a “family” shows the prominent role that these organizations are playing not only in the lives of their clients but also their employees.

The use of the family label was not always an indication of something all positive. An example is the case of Martha not only described the nonprofit she previously worked for as “one big family” but labeled her current program and co-workers as “step-children.” The step-children label was a depiction of a group of people who do not feel like they totally belong to the family. Step-children do not necessarily get the best of treatment from the family. They are in many instances considered to be parasites that do not wholly belong to the family. In this case the family label show the discriminatory practices that sometime take place in families whereby some members in the family are not accorded full rights and respect. That was how Martha saw her program in relation to the bigger organizations that she was part of. Arguably just like in any other family, there were problems with the family of organizations represented in the research.

*We are a Team:* Another description of the relationship between an organization and its members is that of a team. A team is a group of people with interdependent skills and common goals (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). The success of a team is largely dependent on member identifying, with the team and their goals. The metaphor of “team” also shifts the nonprofit sector as a family into a task orientation. The team label is articulated by Janet, an executive director of a community action agency. When I asked Janet about her role in the organization she responded “I am one part of a team…. To
Janet the organization is a team of people dedicated to the service of their community. By calling her organization a team, Janet identifies herself as a member of a group of people who identify with each other and their goals.

The label of a team also came up during the discussions of crisis within organizations. An example was that of that of Steven, whose organization during a crisis period called on all its members to think of themselves as members of a team that had to work together to weather the financial storm that the organization was experiencing. “The interesting thing, though, is that our executive directors really do a good job of promoting that hey this is a team, we are gonna sink or swim together” (Steven). To Steven, being part of a team meant sharing the willingness to bear each others’ burden to succeed as an organization.

The team self-label shows the extent to which the participants believe they are part of a larger structure and that they need to play their part whether it is to make sacrifices or work together to accomplish their goals.

*Other Salient Organizational Identification Themes*

The third step in the analysis that is the emergence of other identification targets was used to examine what other identification targets were important to the participants. Open coding enables the researcher to unpack embedded themes in data (Straus, 1987). Guided by the research questions, my analysis unearthed other descriptions that shed light on the complex nature of grant-funded identification in organizations.

I went into this research with an assumption that there was a possibility of finding grant-funded employees occupying liminal positions in nonprofit organizations. This
assumption was based on my prior research that examined how difficult it was to place grant-funded employees into a neatly defined category as workers due to the nature of their funding. I was, however, not sure whether they would describe their situation in ways that were similar to the concept of liminality or what meanings they would attach to their liminal positions. All the participants, in spite of their identification with their organizations, indicated that as grant-funded employees they placed in different positions which could be described as liminal in nature either through the inconsistency of their funding or their job descriptions.

In describing her position in her organization Angela said, “You feel permanent but you know it is a temporary thing.” Several other interviewees expressed similar sentiments during their interviews. Once a grant was awarded and people employed they knew their positions were contingent on the continual funding of the project. Being placed in a situation of permanency and temporality was the liminal positions grant-funded employees found themselves in. They are neither permanent employees nor temporal employees. All the participants indicated that when they were first employed by their nonprofit organizations they were explicitly told that the position was grant-funded, a codename for don’t get too comfortable in this position it could end soon.

I went into this research with an assumption that some grant-funded employees were discriminated against in through pay and benefits because their employment was grant based. I was however pleasantly surprised that none of the participants in the research indicated any form of discrimination of disparaging treatment either from their colleague or management. None of the participants indicated that they were treated
differently from the others because of the nature of their grants. Francis, an executive
director of a community action agency described the distribution of benefits in his
organization this way:

We don’t discriminate. I know there are some agencies that do. We have a pay
scale that pretty much cross the level. Now we have different levels and different
jobs, but we have always been very careful to be equal and everybody has
opportunity for insurance, everybody has the opportunity this or the other.
Nobody has certain advantages over others.
But that is a struggle because we did have some programs that had a lot of money
and did not know what to do with it and they will pay their employees very well.
And it created a lot of hardships. So we don’t have that anymore.

This was not to say, as Francis hinted, that all organizations provide the same benefits to
their grant-funded employees. Mavis described her benefits this way “I have a reasonable
salary; I have health benefits which is amazing.”

This does not however nullify the fact that some grant-funded employees do not
get equal treatment within their organizations. Some organizations do have part-time
grant-funded employees whose benefits could be different from those of full-time
employees in the organization. The point here is that, due to the nature of grants, some of
these employees described finding themselves in precarious positions.

One supervisor who was in the process of shifting an employee as a result of
funding cuts was apprehensive of his impeding decision.
We have had that situation several times. I feel bad for that staff person who seems like a pawn in a kind of bigger game that they don’t have control over. And it’s pretty hollow if you get to the point where you say well it’s either that or you lose your job. That doesn’t feel good taking a job that you really did not apply for, but situation has developed in such a way that you may need to accept. It is never very good. I think we lost one of our teachers around that, we changed the job description maybe one too many times and it is like “you know what I’m going to find the next best thing.”

We have a staff member right now is going through that problem about their fourth time. And I think it wears on the person they start to think “I’m –really, does this organization really value me or do they just using me to fill a position.”

Again we see some of the circumstances grant-funded employees are subjected to. This could be construed as compounding or intensifying the emotion associated with their being in liminal positions. Although these shifts maybe have been in good faith, they only go to confirm the liminal positions grant-funded employees occupy in their organizations. An example is the case of Joana, a Vista volunteer in a community development agency.

When I interviewed for my Vista position, I liked the interviewer here, she is my supervisors I just liked her. And I was particularly attracted to this position for several reasons.

One of which was that it seems that I will have a lot of autonomy in terms of bringing to table things that I thought were important and kind of generating my
own projects. And it was something that I had no previous experience. I did not know anything about transportation I had not worked in an office I didn’t know anything about nonprofit and how they work, so that was all attractive to me. But truly the selling point to me was my supervisor. I had a good feeling about her as a person and trusted her involvement with the organization and that was enough for me to join. If she enjoyed it enough here and agreed with them then I too may enjoy it.

I identified with her and then join the organization…

Joana had a desire to serve her community but was not very sure about whether her current organization was the right means to achieve that end. She joined the organization because of her supervisor and thereby was hoping that the good experience she had with the supervisor at the time of contact would translate into a good experience for her with the organization. In this way she was more focused on her relationship with her supervisor than on what the organization does and what role she could play in that. Her description of the relationships continues.

I don’t think I completely belong here. I don’t think it makes sense for me to put it close to each other and say I feel much more involved in the HAP, and this much more with Vista, it is not really comparable, but I do feel like I am a Vista. Like I am a Vista, there are no ifs about that. And that is definitely something I am proud of. Other vistas have assignments that I might not particularly want or even think should be funded through Vista. It is a very diverse group but I’d say majority of
vistas are young like me. So that has to do with my sense of belonging to that group.

As a Vista worker, Joana describes having loyalties to the volunteer organization that had placed her within this community agency to work on specific projects. Vista workers are a group of young people who do domestic service for stipends and educational benefits. They are normally posted to different organizations as support staff. Their loyalties are mostly with Americorps which monitors and coordinates their services. The strong identification self-label, “I am a Vista” shows how strongly Joana identifies with the organization that assigned her to work for the community action agency. She therefore saw herself as an outsider who was sojourning in the community agency but who could not dismiss the organization she was assigned to. She was the archetype of the person Turner (1967) described as being “between and betwixt” p. 93. Although in her statements she indicated a strong identification with Vista, she could not dismiss the fact that she was part of another organization and she was required to behave in a particular way.

Another example was that of Martha, who lost her job to a senior member of the organization who, due to budget constraints, agreed to take a pay cut to take her job. When I asked Martha whether she had ever endured the pain of being laid-off from an organization because of lack of grant renewal she laughed and answered:

I have before I came here. I worked for Headstart and I got laid-off there. It is hard. You know because the lady who took my position, due to being there more
years than me, had absolutely no idea what my position is, so it was hard to train her, so I am familiar with that.

Anytime you work in a grant-funded position you have to be willing to get laid-off and hope it comes back….

What was hard that is that the lady, who like I said took my job, she had a director’s position where I was just a mentor, so she took a tremendous pay cut to take my position over. Plus I have already built all these relationships with my day care providers so they did not need to go, it was hard to say goodbye to them, but train her that same week. You know, like I just if she had been there 15 years longer than me I should not have to train her. But it was a different job. That was what was hard. It was letting go of the people that I had already developed relationship with, the children I have already developed relationship with, and that was something that I wanted to do but I’ve got to leave and she ‘s taking over.

That was hard. It was so hard.

Martha said she loved the organization and felt very bad that her job was being given to someone who she had to train. She felt it was unfair for her to be laid off just because that person had seniority. At least as she later said she believed that qualification and experience should be considered in making the decisions about who got laid-off during financial crises.

Being placed in liminal positions affects the grant-funded employees in different ways as illustrated by the preceding examples. The natures of grants create unstable environments for most of these workers who may love their jobs but cannot rely on them
because they are not sure if their grants will be renewed or not or how to respond when
one was required to answer to two different organizations.

Participants in the research overwhelmingly indicated a strong identification with
their organizations. Through the use of the assumed or the transcendent “we”, self-labels
and other descriptions, they showed that they share common values with their
organizations and were pretty much involved in the activities of their organizations. A
few however indicated a stronger identification with their projects within their
organizations but even then, they also indicated some form of identification with their
organizations. The organizations represented in this research could be said to play pivotal
roles in the lives of the participants.

*The Meaning of Identification with Organization*

The data showed an unequivocal mixture of frustrations and rewards of working
as grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations. The question is why do people
continue to subject themselves to an employment mechanism that is unstable and fraught
with emotional labor? The answer to this question came in the form of the participants’
responses to what it means for them to work in nonprofits organizations. In this section of
the chapter, I examine the second part of research question one that is, what meanings do
grant-funded employees assign to their identification with their organizations.

*Identification through Antithesis*

Cheney (1983) again drawing from Burke, argued that one of the rhetorical tactics
used by organizations to promote identification is through the use of a nemesis, a
common enemy that provides the reason to unite. Identification through antithesis, as
Cheney called it, is the process whereby organizations create a sense of common enemy to promote unity and strong identification among employees (Cheney, 1983). It is through the process of antithesis that members of organizations see themselves as being on the same team fighting a common enemy. When I asked the participants about why they are doing what they are doing there has little hesitations in their answers: They are working to fight against poverty. Chelsea’s response was quite typical:

> Working at my job means a lot to me. We are the only organization that provides these kinds of services in the region. A lot of young people therefore depend on our services. And we get to work with a lot of young people in the region.

As far as Chelsea was concerned, her organization provides a unique service in the region. Their services are strategic and critical to the wellbeing of young people who are having a hard time due to family or personal issues.

> Martha responded to the question of what it means for her by drawing on her life experience and her experience as a nonprofit worker to make her point.

> Poverty is a big thing. Because where I went to high school, we had poverty no doubt, but before I came to Coolstone County it a bit of an eye opener. I was born and raised in Appalachia Ohio, but I just never really exposed to the poverty that these kids I’m dealing with are exposed to. I mean, before, when I was a teacher, before coming into this position, we will do home visits since we were a preschool, and we will be going in and we will be sitting on dirt floors. It was just sad.
Her experience with the children that she works with, looking at their backgrounds and circumstances was what drives her to be doing what she was doing.

George, a program manager at a community-based organization, drew on his years of experience with nonprofits:

I think it means the same thing for me in terms of providing services to the poor. I have been dedicated to working in nonprofits my whole life. It provides me the kind of work and career that I am interested in, it provides me the support among staff although the orientation is different from what I work with in the past to work with people that I like. There is still orientations towards services towards alleviation of poverty, towards working with organizations that have integrity and accountability those the things that are important to me and this organization has those things.

For George, doing this job was a means to fulfill his passion for helping the poor. The congruence of his values and goals with the organization was very meaningful to him and made his work worthwhile.

Mary, a housing coordinator with a community development agency, was passionate in her response:

It really means a lot because we are able to help so many people. We have quite a few different programs and even one of the programs if we can go out and be able to help somebody to be able to maintain and stay in their house by making repairs, one they don’t have to be homeless, another they don’t have to feel worthless
because they can’t help to take care of their own homes. And for another it gives them more self worth.

They feel better about themselves because they are able, they don’t look at it as a handout they look at it as a helping hand. And that is what the agency is about. It is a very good organization and I feel what we are doing is a very worthwhile thing. I mean any community action any, nonprofit is helping the public.

These are just examples of the responses for the participants. All the responses had one thing in common –to help poor people. All the participants indicated that working with their organization means that they get to work with people to get out of poverty.

Although money is part of the equation, the focus was on playing their part in the fight against poverty. As I have already indicated the region where this research was conducted is noted for low incomes and high level of poverty.

These men and women in the nonprofit sector therefore see themselves as part of the army of people who are waging the war on poverty that is ruining the lives of many of the people in the region. It can therefore be argued that one of the strongest bonds that bind grant-funded employees in nonprofits in represented in this research was as their desire to help alleviate poverty.

The strong organizational identification among the research participants in this study could be adduced to identification through antithesis. Identification through antithesis postulates that members of an organization are more likely to identify more with their organization in the face of a common enemy (Cheney, 1983). When faced with a common enemy, many people are likely to disregard a few areas of differences or
misunderstandings to form a strong bond to fight the common enemy. In the case of this research, the common enemy is “poverty” and one can see the determination of these research participants as they work together to eliminate it from their continual references to the reason why they chose to work in the nonprofit sector.

The identification through antithesis exemplifies the power of common values in promoting identification. There are those who came to their nonprofits with a clear understanding of what they want to do, and there are others who developed this identification after they began working at the nonprofit. For example, Steven reported that he saw a position, applied for it, and soon realized that he ought to be in the business of helping disadvantaged youth.

I guess for me I reached a place where I really did want to change what I was doing. I had an extreme burn out in what I was doing before. I had always had a heart for helping people and when I heard about the Youthbuild program, something inside me just said that is your job. And I went after it as though it was my job and it’s worked out very well. It combined the skilled set that I already possess in construction and the ability to help disadvantaged young peoples. For me it was just coming together of good timing, good opportunity.

Steven did not seem to have been socialized to work with young people who were disadvantaged. It was through the organizational socialization process that he caught the vision and the values that had shaped the formation of the organization he was working for. Once the process of organizational socialization had taken root in him, he seemed very comfortable joining his colleagues in the fight against poverty.
I would say that I am very much in-sync with both the job and the organization. We have very common vision I am totally on board with the vision and mission. It is interesting because I have been there almost from the beginning so I really don’t know or care much what the organization will go I saw I guess I was more selfish in my goals. I saw the job as a way to fulfill something that I felt was important. And as it so happen, my vision and the organization’s vision grew together.

And the other cool thing is that I think I have been around long enough to have actually helped shaped somewhat vision of the organization.

The conceptualization of a “common enemy” as an identification mechanism takes place on two levels. One is anticipatory vocational socialization and anticipatory organizational socialization. Once the individual starts working for the organization, they are constantly reminded either through formal organizational communication techniques or the people they interact with on daily basis that they are in a battle against poverty and must work closely with their colleagues and other nonprofit organizations to accomplish this goal.

Results for Research Question Two

Grant-funded employees naturally rely on grantors to function. It is these grantors who gave them the funds to sustain their positions and their programs. Research question two was aimed at examining what kind of relationships grant-funded employees have with their grantors and what it means to them to relate to these groups of people. All the participants in this research express weak identification with grantors, as I demonstrate below.
Grantors Kept at Earshot

As shown in Table 2, there about a hundred and sixty-seven (167) instances where participants use the assumed “we” when discussing their organization’s relationship and communications with grantors. Since this research was about grant-funded employees and grants, it was not surprising that majority of the discussions centered on grantors hence the high incidence of the use of the assumed “we” in reference to discussions around participants and their organizations’ relationships with their grantors. The use of the assumed “we” however, was a means to show identification between the grant-funded employees and their organizations on one hand and the grantors on the other. None of the participants used the transcendent “we” to show strong identification with their grantors. Even Karla, the only research participant who was happy about her working relationships with her grantors, made distinctions between herself and her organization and the funders:

We have very good relationship at least my funders. We have very good relationships and we even have advisory committee for some of the work they we do and the funders sit on that advisory committee and help give us advice as to how and what they think would help the program be implemented better. This illustration shows the extent to which participants at least tried to show a separation between themselves and their grantors by using the assumed “we” to show their identification with their organizations or programs. At the beginning of Karla’s statement, one would be tempted to think that she lump her program and
the funders together but by the end of the statement, she made a clear distinction
between her program and the funders.

It is important to note, as I discuss later in this chapter, that the reluctance by
participants to use the transcendent “we” did not seem to indicate a complete lack of any
form of identification with their grantors.

In all the instances cited, the use of “we” meant the participants and their
organizations on one hand dealing with another entity that is the grantor. Take the
example of Francis describing his organization’s relationships with its funders:

We run an open door philosophy. If you’ve got a reason to come and look at our
books come on down any day of the week. And our funders love that because they
know they are not going to find anything or that if they do find something, hey,
we messed up let’s fix it. But it takes a lot of time to build up that trust.

Francis tried to show the strong relationship that his organization has with its funders but
he separated the organizations from the funders through the use of the words “we” and
“they” to show the distinction. His organization’s comfort level with its funders is largely
due to their long partnership.

The relationship between grantors and their grantees, and by extension grant-
funded employees, can best be characterized as keeping each other within earshot. None
of the participants indicated an overt attempt at fostering strong identification by either
their organizations or their grantors. The communication between them is limited to tool
and frame-talks, thereby limiting their communication to what should be done, how it
should be done and sometimes why they need to be done in a particular way. The
communication is mainly about what grantors are expected to do, how they can do it and why they should do it. In this data there were no evidences of granting agencies using elaborate rhetorical strategies to foster any form of identification with grant-funded employees.

In his examination of talk, Marshak (1998) argues that there are three levels of talk that takes place in organizations. The first two are tool-talk and frame-talks. These types of talk deal with how things are to be done and why respectively. The third level of talk- mythopoetic-talk is a means of conveying ideologies. It can be argued that strong identifications are conveyed through mythopoetic-talk because they deal with issues of values and ideologies. Hence by placing emphasis on tool-talk and frame-talk, grantors and grant-funded employees limit the possibility of enhancing their identification with each other.

It is important to point out that many participants indicated that they and the grantors have common interest and that is the foundation of their relationship. As one participant put it “the funders identify more with what we are doing and they want to support us” (Karla). The lack of use of the assumed “we” does not therefore totally eliminate the prevalence of a form of identification between the two entities. Again the type of identification between the two is evident in the participants’ responses to what it means for them to be associated with the grantors. The second half of the question therefore brings to the fore some of the common issues that bind these two groups together.
Identification with Funders through the Use of Self-labels

I was surprised to see little use of self-labels to describe the relationship between grantors and grant-funded employees. The only self-label in the data was the description of the interaction between grantors and grantees as a “relationship.” Karla identified two types of relationships between grantors and grantees, “cold relationship” and “good relationship.” She claims that “some grantors they just want to give you the money and it is a very cold relationship. You provide some and nothing really happens and that is not exciting. You do the work and you meet the guidelines and the goals and that is it. But we have very good relationships, at least my funders we have very good relationships.” It is all about relationships and these relationships could be either “cold” or “good”. A “cold relationship,” according to Karla, was based on minimal contact between the grantors and grantees, whereby the grantor gives the funding and expects just progress reports. In contrast, a “good relationship” involved frequent communication between grantors and grantee about the progress of the project. Based on Karla’s description of the her organization’s relationships with some of the its funders it could be argued that a “good relationship” between grantors and grantees takes time to build and many grantors do not fund projects long enough to build this type of relationship.

Meaning of Grantee-grantor Relationship

The data indicate that the meaning grant-funded employees attached to their relationships are determined by several factors. Some of these factors include the type of grants; the length of the partnership; the role of the participant in the organization and finally the reason for the partnership in the first place.
First, I discuss the participants’ views on how the natures of the grants affect their relationships as expressed by the participants when describing their interactions with the various granting agencies and what that means to them. The three main types of grants that the research participants discussed were Federal, state, foundation and community block grants. There are wide variations between these grants and the type of relationships that develop between the grantors and grant-funded employees. Federal grants seem to attract the most scrutiny from grant managers. Many of the participants were exasperated about the levels of control and oversight of Federal grants. One example of this exasperation comes from Steven, who explained that he is still struggling to meet the Federal guidelines of his grant.

The first six years we operated under HUD and it was very stressful though because they issued grants on a yearly basis and you are never out of that cycle. When you get the grant you were working towards that next grant and it was very stressful. Four years ago on the national level Youthbuild was taken out of the line item from HUD and moved over to the Department of Labor and the grant cycle was expanded to two years which helped our comfort level tremendously. What we found, though, is that DOL is very stringent they want to dictate to you. This is how you should do it and these are the outcomes that we want. So you have to take that and challenge your staff to hit those numbers and yet you have to maintain a workplace that’s not overbearing so it is an interesting balance.

The interviewees noted that there was much more communication between grant-funded employees and their grantors when the grant was from the Federal government. The
stringent level of oversight from the Federal government meant constant communication
with their funders to ensure compliance and sustainability. Victor, an executive director
of a youth mentoring program, described it this way when I asked him about differences
between Federal and other grantors.

It is completely different. It is day and night. Like the one I just mentioned. It’s a
human scale versus government scale. With local foundation there is a person
who I know personally and I can go to her office, I can call her on my phone.
There is a formal structure but there is much less oversight. Usually, all you are
required to do is one final report at the end of the program. Sometime they will
want half way point report. And they are generally very simple, maybe a page
long. Whereas with the government program oh my God, monthly reporting then
quarterly reporting and annual reporting following all kinds of ridiculous
measures that they have mandated. You are not usually involved in the objectives
or the performance measures that they want measured. Whereas with the local
group you can say “you know what, this is what we do well, this is what we want
to change” and they will say “yea that is great”

There seemed to be a much closer relationships between the grantors and grantees when
the grantors were state or community based. Local or community grantors were able to
form good working relationships with the organizations thereby creating opportunities for
flexibility with programming and the use of funds.
Another example of this closer relationship can be inferred from Karla, a supervisor in a community based organization. When I asked her about her interactions with her grantors, she responded:

Absolutely, some grantors they just want to give you the money and it is a very cold relationship. You provide some and nothing really happens and that is not exciting.

You do the work and you meet the guidelines and the goals and that is it.

But we have very good relationships, at least my funders we have very good relationships, and we even have advisory committee for some of the work we do and the funders sit on that that advisory committee and help give us advice as to how what they think would help the program be implement better.

And because of the relationship with this funder when the one money dried and we were not funded anymore, 2/3 of my money, I mean you come in to work today and say I’ve got to find some money or this program is not going to exist in the same way, or not in the same way. But because of the relationship that I had with the other funders, we had talked talk to them and say the one funding source is being threatened and just to let you know and they said keep me informed and so we did. And anytime we updates on the other funding, we kept the other funder informed.

And at the end when we had no funding from the other sources I emailed him and I said “it’s gone, the money is gone,” and we had already been talking to him for probably about six weeks or two months and he said:
“how much money do you need?” and we told him and he gave it to us.

But it’s that relationship. Being informed and being on the committees. And when we go to Columbus we take the group there and have them meet them and it is all about the relationships. The funders identify more with what we are doing and they want to support us.

Maintaining a certain level of closeness, as illustrated by Kate’s experience, is important in the overall strategy to ensure the constant inflow of funds. However, as I have already indicated, interviewees demonstrated a certain level of trepidation since organizations do not necessarily want grantors to be overbearing. Striking the balance in the relationships is a challenge that organizations face. John discussed the nature of his relationships with his funders.

Most of the times because a lot of our funding that we receive is a long term grant funding. We’ve been receiving this for 20 years. We help actually develop a program that is now generating these sources of funds that is the cases with Crystal Gas, the warm choice program. Like, my father and my predecessor in my position actually developed the program and shopped it [to] Crystal Gas. Crystal Gas agreed, and now we just receive that funding every year. We have to apply for it every year but we do receive it since we have good outcomes we remain as the grantee.

Whenever you are seeking new grant funds there is a learning period. I think we are going to experience that with the Haven Oil funds we have just received.
Generally with our long term funding, they know we are going to administer the program the way they want us to. So it is really a hands-off approach. Haven Oil not so much, they want to be involved in developing the program and tweaking it as they go along. And sometimes that is difficult because we as the fundee may not understand all of the goals of the grantor and they don’t necessarily understand our corporate structure here. And over time we get past the end and come to a balance point. But the first year of a new grant cycle can be a little exciting.

Building trust and relationships is absolutely important for grantors and grantees. The balancing act here is to maintain good enough relationships to ensure the constant inflow of funds to sustain the activities of the organization. John did not like the fact that Haven Oil wanted to be more involved in the day-to-day running of the grant. He saw Haven Oil’s desire for close involvement as an intrusion and a demonstration of their lack of trust that his organization can accomplish what they promised at the time of the application for the grant. Crystal Gas was therefore the ideal grantor for him. They provide the funds, maintain a certain level of contact but largely leave the organization to fulfill its goals. It can therefore be argued that grantors put little effort into facilitating organizational identification with their client agencies. Their relationships with their client organization were transactional in nature with each party performing particular functions to accomplish a common goal.

Identification and Positions in Organizations
The data also showed that the type of relationships between grant-funded employees and grantors were also largely dependent on the role and position of the employee. The relationships between grant-funded employees and grantors seemed to mean different things to different people, which, given the responses of some of the interviewees, could be related to their positions within the organization.

The supervisors in the research indicated that they normally had more information about the resources within the organization. They were also funded by multiple grants. All these factors helped them to secure their positions within the organization. All the supervisors in the research indicated that they were not worried about the security of their positions but rather their constant search of funding sources to fund their employees and projects. There were therefore differences in the types of emotions experienced by those in management and those at the lower end of the organizational structure.

The emotional rollercoaster associated with the discontinuation of funding for projects by grantors is felt more by those who are new to the organization than those who are “tenured.” This was one of the concerns of a senior staff member who was worried about the nonprofit sector losing a lot of passionate and talented people. She admitted being secure in her job “I have never felt job insecure. I always feel secured. But that is not to say that other people don’t live with that anxiety” (Kate). Later on in the interview she expressed her concern about the practice of cutting jobs according to seniority and its repercussions on the nonprofit sector.

The stratification and the complexity of funding arrangements according to the participants is a major factor in defining the relationships between grant-funded
employees and grantors. Those who are at the lower levels of the organizations normally have limited communications with the grantors since their supervisors usually handle the major communication between the organization and the grantors. They are therefore a step removed from the funders. When I asked Martha about her relationship with grantors she responded “I have not experienced direct communications with grantors”. Her response was not unique, many of those who occupy middle or lower level positions in their nonprofits have little to no contact with the grantors. Participants who did not have direct access to grantors demonstrated recognition of the significance of grants in what they do by referring to the stipulations of the grants.

The descriptions of their relationships with the grantors were thus limited to the impact their actions do have on the organizational and grantors goals. They know that they have dealings with the grantors but the only control they have in that relationships is to perform the tasks and hope that they have done a good job to receive continued funding or that there are still funds and the political will to continue to fund their projects.

In some instances, interviewees noted that the supervisors even made conscious efforts to come between the grantors and their employees to distil the communication between them and the other grant-funded employees. An example is that of Steven who was reluctant to share all the information about grantors with his employees.

It is interesting balance. I try to be the buffer somewhat, but we do have to have sometimes very frank discussions, that if we don’t hit these, you understand that funding could eventually not come our way. It is what it is sobering but you have to put it out there. It will be unfair to say to your staff that “well, we did not get
funded because we did not hit our target,” and they will say “well, we did not know that we were shooting for this.” So it is a balance that we juggle. We don’t pound it but everyone knows.

As the statement of Steven indicates, in some instances supervisors serve as gate keepers thereby limiting the interactions between grantors and other grant-funded employees. But here again, they try to balance it to ensure that lower level employees are not oblivious of the grant requirements. The question is whether having a gatekeeper is good for everybody in the organization given the dynamic and unpredictable natures of grants? I think an affirmative answer depends on how much information is shared with the rest of the members of the organization whose employments are dependent on the grants. The more they know about particular the stipulations of the grants, the more they are likely to work towards accomplishing its goals.

The incidents cited above showed that the closer the grantor was to the grantee the more likely they were to be flexible and to experience some immediacy, especially at the state and local levels. Ironically, the closer relationships at the local levels also made the discontinuation of grants much more difficult and painful. The relationships between the grantors and grantees at the local levels, in many instances was based on an understanding that the grantors knew the work the nonprofit organization was doing and the rationale behind it. Cutting funding for projects could therefore be interpreted as a betrayal of the trust between them. In the case of Kate losing her funding, she blamed the governor because he had other priorities. The game of grant funding is a carefully
orchestrated set of relationships designed to ensure mutual support but not oblivious of possible discontinuation of funding.

_The Joys and Pains of Partnerships with Funders_

The participants indicated that partnership with grantors has its challenges and rewards. The interviewees’ responses to questions about the granting agency reflect both their opportunities and fears as grant-funded employees. They were excited about what grants enable them to do and the emotions associated with being grant-funded employees. Many of the participants see the relationships between grant-funded employees and grantors as being about business. Jesse aptly describe what it means as “I look at all that grant-funded as business.” As a former business owner he sees the relationships as a business contract. Thus to him the relationship means business. Grantees are given funds to provide services. Receiving and executing the grants were good, but there was always the possibility of losing grants.

Others had more nuanced meanings to the relationships. Janet for example saw it this way:

Never take anything for granted. It can change in a second. It can get a whole lot better it can get a whole lot worse at the same time. You can this part of the agency swimming in money and this part of the agency scrapping bottom trying to survive. It’s so unreal how that can happen. And being the person up here it gives me the opportunity to see ways that I can restructure the agency to benefit to help enhance other programs. So it provides a lot of opportunities you definitely don’t keep the same status quo.
I think that keeps you refreshed because you constantly have to monitor yourself. You constantly have to know where you at. You have to be a good employee because if you don’t do a good job you can lose that grant really quick.

I mean it doesn’t stay stagnant, I mean we don’t just keep making widgets, they may say tomorrow we are no longer going to fund the children trust fund program and provide services for child abuse, our focus has now changed so we have sit down and brain storm of what you can use that money to see what you can do for the community.

Janet agrees with the sentiment conveyed by Jesse’s statement that the relationship is “just business,” but she articulates what this relationship means in a more nuanced way. As far as she is concerned about the relationship is based on accountability and creativity. It means an opportunity to do some good things in one’s community to bring about social change. It affords her the opportunity to develop new and exciting programs that can have a positive impact on her community. But lurking behind this excitement and opportunity is the fear of losing funding. According to Janet, having a relationship with grantors means being prepared for the possibility of losing funding.

The sentiment of the fear of losing funding is echoed by John in his description of what the relationships with grantors means to him.

It means that you had better pay attention to that because that can go away at anytime. It also has spurred me to do some social entrepreneurial projects and try to get away from dependency on grant funding.
The temporal nature of grants permeates the relationships between grant-funded employees and grantors. The relationship is perceived by many as a temporal arrangement or partnership designed to accomplish a particular goal. Once the goal was achieved or partially achieved, there was the possibility of a shift in emphasis by either of the partners. This awareness of the temporal limitations of grants could be the reason behind the lack of mutual efforts at forging stronger identification between the parties. Identification presupposes long term association and in the grant world, the chances of long associations are minimal.

*Emotionality and the Grant-funded Employee*

The possibility of grants ending also brings to the fore the emotionality associated with the relationship between grant-funded employees and grantors. Some participants described these relationships as “ebb and flow” others see it as “a wave.” These water metaphors were used by some of the participants to show the instability of the sector and how that affects them. In many instances, grant-funded employees are compelled to endure a wide range of emotions as they get closer to the end of their grant cycle. An example is that of Karla, the supervisor, and her employees. She describes the emotional turmoil her employees endured as they waited for news about their funding.

People get into a panic mode. They do because they don’t know if they have a job in a month or whatever the time frame is.

We actually had a grant funded two ladies many years ago that were grant-funded, and we worked very hard with the legislature to make sure that was funded in the state budget and worked very hard, it was taken out, put back in and taken out, put
back in and these women were just torn apart because today they have a job in six weeks, tomorrow they don’t. Today they do, tomorrow they don’t. And it was just really hard on them.

And at the end yea we made it into the state budget. It was passed and it was put on the governor’s desk to sign and he vetoed it. And they did not have a job the next day.

And it changed the outlook on the services that they were providing. But you know, to come to work and think that you don’t have a job and then to come to work and think I do and then I don’t, then I do.

This incident shows the emotional rollercoaster that grant-funded employees go through as they come to the end of their grant cycle. The political volatility of government grants and the uncertainty of continued funding make it difficult for grant-funded employees, especially as they approach the end of their grant cycles. One could just imagine what it meant for the two grant-funded employees to be subjected to such uncertainty with the job depending on the whims of the legislature and the governor. The message from many of the participants is that you do not take anything for granted in a grant-funded employment. Your job security is not guaranteed and you must be mindful of that. Hence, to many grant-funded employees especially those who are not tenured or senior managers, the relationship with grantors means an opportunity to work on the things they are passionate about but also comes with a sense of job insecurity. Mavis was blunt when I asked her about what the grants and grantors mean to her.
It means that I have no idea what my job security is. You know, I think you know, because this is new to me, and maybe I just don’t get it yet, I think you know, even working for a small organization, what are my chances to actually advance in the organization. They are good but the salary ranges is not that great so even if I advance to whatever position, I might actually be making what somebody with similar background will be making maybe employed by the government or by a private corporate organization. So that scares me a little bit.

The lack of job security was a constant theme when interviewees discussed the relationship between grant-funded employees and grantors. This fact is also compounded by the low remuneration in the sector. Mavis’ sentiment about the low salary coupled with job insecurity is not unique to her. Jesse contrasted his current position as a nonprofit grant-funded employee to his previous job as an environmental consultant.

I think it is the lack of funds to use to have a nice office, perhaps. We don’t have funds that we can just use to maintain things the way we will like too. We don’t have nice offices like people in the university do. We have to manage our budgets very tightly because money doesn’t come in for those types of things. I think that is one of the worst things that I see. I have never had, I have worked with a large international consulting firm, I run my own consulting firm, I have never had my own office where I have my own door and I probably never will.

But that is one of those things you that, what we do is functional and that is how we operate.
They are restrictive and gotten more restrictive over the years. When I first came here we used to receive adequate money to pay our rent for this building, they don’t pay all these now they pay half the rent from the large grant that we get. We might get a grant for $300,000-$500,000 but they want the money to go for construction. They don’t want the money to go for operation of the office and it makes it very difficult for us to fund those funds. We have to rely upon memberships outside educational work for the funding to kept the lights on and keep the door open. And that is frustrating.

The frustration expressed by Jesse shows the sacrifice that grant-funded employees endure in their workplaces. The restrictions placed on grants severely limits what these people can do with the funds that they get from their grantors. There are a lot of miscellaneous things they would like to do with the funds, but they are largely limited by the grant stipulations.

The emotional toll of being grant-funded does not however totally overshadow the excitement and the competitiveness some associate with being grant-funded. The thrill of winning a competitive grant was important to all the participants. It was a sign of approval of their work. Steven could not hide his pride when he talked about how many grants they had received from the Federal government.

I guess my perspective on that is that, the demography of our area actually allows us to write tremendously attractive grants and quite honestly on the national level there are close to 200 hundred Youthbuild programs nationwide. I would say we are in the top 10% of being able to procure funding. Other programs go through
extended periods of time where they will miss I would say we are easily in the top
10% of grant procurement.

As tedious as the process of grant writing and grant management can be, many
interviewees, like Steven, believed it was worth their time and energy. As Mary aptly put
it:

To write a grant is very time consuming. I am sure you have done a lot of research.
It takes a lot of research, it takes a lot of time and effort to do it, but even if we
don’t get the grant I feel like it was still worthwhile to go through the process to
get the experience of trying to apply for the grant. There is one grant that we have
applied for four years in a row, we haven’t got it. But we are going to keep trying.
And I feel like the process itself is needed each time, I write another grant it is
more experience, maybe I am going to get better and better with the grants. It is a
long drawn out process but I don’t feel that it is something we shouldn’t.

The process of grant writing to Mary is not only an opportunity to secure funding for her
program but also to use the process as a means to conduct an internal review of her
program. She takes every grant writing as an opportunity for self-assessment. It is a tool
for examining the structures and policies in organizations.

The description of the relationships between grant-funded employees and their
grantors was an interesting one. Interviewees described that both the employees and the
grantors seemed to understand that they are in a partnership working towards the same
goals. However, as participants noted, there seemed to be very little attempt by both
grantors and grantees to forge strong identification between themselves. According to the
participants in this study, the relationship between employees and grantors seemed to have been reduced to a working partnership with minimal attempt at molding each other into a particular image. In this way, the identification between grantors and the grant-funded employees could be described as minimal.

Results of Research Question Three

The third research question was designed to explore whether grant-funded employees expressed any form of identification with the beneficiaries of their services and, if so, to find out what the identification with the beneficiaries mean to them. Grant-funded employees are subjected to multiple identification targets and in the nonprofit sector, the clients or beneficiaries of services are major identity targets. Many of these employees interact with clients on daily basis. This research therefore seeks to understand what type of identification grant-funded employees have with this group of people and it means to them. Two distinct factors for identification with service beneficiaries emerged: 1) identification through lived experience and 2) Identification through empathy and understanding.

Use of the Assumed “we” to Include Beneficiaries

Participants in the research limited their use of the assumed “we” to refer to themselves and their organizations when discussing their relationships with the beneficiaries of their services. When talking about the relationship with their community or beneficiaries of their services, many participants seldom used the transcendent “we” to indicate their identification with their clients. The use of the “we” in discussing the
relationships with beneficiaries usually revolved around the participants identifying with their organizations as they work with their beneficiaries.

A few of the participants however used the transcendent “we” to show their strong identification with their community and beneficiaries. For example when Kate said “we suffer in this part of the state” she meant the people she served including herself, live in a deprived part of the state and that makes her work both more important and more challenging at the same time. They were challenging to her because her organization have a lot of work to do because of the endemic poverty in the area and secondary, she had to rely on a lot of external funders to fund her projects. As result of this, Kate, saw herself as separated from the people served since she strongly identify with them as a longtime resident and a “community organizer for social change” (Kate).

However, focusing on the use of the assumed and transcendent “we” cannot therefore give us a full picture of how grant-funded employees described their identification with the beneficiaries of their services. It is important to look at how participants described their common experiences and goals and what unites them to be able to get an understanding of what this relationships is like and what it means to them.

Identification with Beneficiaries through the Use of Self-labels

The participants mostly referred to the beneficiaries of their services as “clients” “customers”, “members of the community” and as “people who need services.” All these labels indicate a transactional and communal relationship between the participants and the beneficiaries of their services. By referring to the clients as “members of the community” participants such as Janet, wanted to show that they share some things in
common and she only had her position as a “member of the community” to serve. This thus connotes constant relationships between the participants and her clients.

One significant label which underscores the strong identification of the participants to their clients was used by Kate the director from Jancot Network, an organization dedicated to helping small businesses to thrive. Kate described her current and past clients as *poster children*. They considered *poster children* because their successes showcase the efficiency of her organization. Kate called them “poster children” because “so many of them write support letters in terms of grants” for her organization. By using the label poster children Kate showed how close the organization was its customer both past and current. The label “children” was an indication of continual relationships that went far beyond just the provision of services for the start-up organizations that rely on Jancot Network. The customers were an essential part in the grand narratives to funders of Jancot about the organization’s efficacy and contributions to the development of the community.

*Other Expressions of Identification with Beneficiaries*

The open coding process provided a picture of a complex relationship between the participants and their customers. In the next few pages I examine the themes that emerged from the data on the nature of the relationship between grant-funded employees and the beneficiaries of their services and what they say this relationships means to them.

As noted above, several of the interviewees had extensive experience in the communities where they worked. Some had grew up in the area and had family and friends in the local community. The type of relationships that existed between the
participants and the beneficiaries of their services was evident in the way some of the participants described their experiences as members of the community and the reason why they decided to enter this line of work. For example, Irene is a worker at a community action agency and she sounded grateful to have the job that she had helping people who are in need of social services, a situation that she was far too familiar with.

I have been working here for two months. Em I had previous experience working for them and em getting assistance with them. They actually helped putting me through school. It is my way of giving back to the community.

I am a career developer and help with the WIA grant. I work with people who are unemployed, underemployed or dislocated. Helping get training if necessary or helping them get back to work.

Irene’s statement shows how much she understands what the organization does and its impact on the community. As a member of the community who has had to depend on the services on the organization, she identifies with the beneficiaries and sees her role as a way to give back to them.

When I posed the question of whom she identifies with most in her line of work, Janet did not mince words.

I probably would have to say, our customers because if the economy is not good it also affect me and my family. When I was raised I was provided what I wanted but I mean we had an outside bathroom, we only had one vehicle, we had a potty line you know I mean, so you know I have been there I mean, I did not have a
bad life, I didn’t have a bad life my mom and dad was good to me they gave me what I can afford but I feel bad for families’ situations, I feel bad for the elderly that is trying to make it with fixed income, that they are trying to live with. You know I feel bad for once a person kind get kicked down it is hard for them to get it turn around. You know there no jobs out there for them to go to so they have to make a choice do leave their family and go somewhere else to try and get a job where they don’t know anybody or do they try to stay here where their families are? So will have to say I probably relate to our customers.

Janet’s assertion of identification with the beneficiaries of her services and her description of the relationships shows how being part of a community facilitates identification. She understands the beneficiaries’ struggles and frustrations as they try to get on their feet because she lives with them and has a firsthand experience of what they are going through. Her identification with the beneficiaries of her services is therefore based on her recognition that she is not an outsider but a community member who happens to be working with an organization dedicated to helping her community.

The experiences of Irene and Janet exemplify the Attraction-Selection-Model (ASA) of organizational identification proposed by Schneider (1987). According to the ASA model, individuals are more likely to identify with an organization or a group when they share similar identities. These identities can be as a result of sharing similar values, experiences and aspirations. It is not everyone who would like to work in the nonprofit sector as a means to help their compatriots. Deciding to work in the nonprofit sector can be understood as part of the self-selection process into a sector that many are quick to
point out does not offer much in terms of salaries but critical to the survival of individuals and communities. Through the prism of ASA we are able to understand why some grant-funded employees identify with the beneficiaries of their services.

It is not everyone working in the nonprofit sector those similar experiences like those of their beneficiaries. There are those who identify with their beneficiaries having gained an understanding of what they are going through. Take the case of Angela, a young woman who mentors children.

For me it is about getting to work with the kids and really kind of passion for low income kids, poverty kids in Coolstone County. When I started Good Kids I just needed a job. I had a teaching certificate. It was a good fit for me. It was one of the motivations that made me to apply to Good Kids. But this time around and I saw Reach for the Stars, I really wanted to see who they served. Because I really wanted to make sure I was working with kids especially kids who are underserved and don’t have certain privileges.

Angela transition into identification with kids, who need adult support in their lives, started with just an ordinary search for a job after her graduation from college. Her identification was a process that developed overtime as a result of interacting with the kids in her first job. Her identification process can be understood through the lens of Self-Categorization Theory (Gioia, 1998). Her identification started with a self-categorization process guided by a meta-contrast that made Angela to see herself as belonging to an organization dedicated to mentoring children. It is through the self-categorization process that she comes to identify with these particular groups of children which then determined
the organization she chose to work for in her next job. Her identification with the beneficiaries of her services could be attributed to her insistence on finding a normative fit in her choice of organization to work for. Angela’s experience also exemplifies how an employee can simultaneously identify with both an organization and the beneficiaries of their services. This was because both the organization and the beneficiaries were engaged in the same “battle” against poverty. Antithesis of poverty was thus a common factor that fostered identification between the participants and their organizations as well as the beneficiaries of their services.

The interviewees’ examples of the identification with the beneficiaries of their services, underscores the significance of anticipatory socialization in organizational identification. As indicated earlier, many of the participants having grown up or lived in the region for a while tended to have been socialized to work towards the alleviation of poverty. Jablin (2001) argues that individual experiences and information gathered from their environment play a significant role in their vocational choices. In the same vein, when people interact with organizations, they are socialized to believe in what the organization stands for and to identify with that organization. The data in this research showed that grant-funded employees identify with the beneficiaries of their services through vocational anticipatory socialization and organizational socialization. Again, the common factor that binds these two groups of grant-funded employees is the desire to extend a helping hand to the poor. The common meaning that they share in their relationship with the beneficiaries of their services was therefore the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people.
Results for Research Question Four

The nonprofit sector has many stakeholders that are potential identification targets. Research question four was based on the assumption that stakeholders in nonprofits to some extent help shape the identity of grant-funded employees. The aim of research question four was therefore to explore employees’ relationship to other identification targets in the nonprofit sector and what these relationships mean to grant-funded employees. The data showed two main additional stakeholders that were important in the line of work of grant-funded employees. These stakeholders were: the board of directors and other nonprofit organizations.

Identification with Other Stakeholders through the Use of the Assumed “we”

It was surprising to see the network of partnerships that the participating organizations are engaged in. These networks were designed to help the participants to pull their resources together to obtain funding or provide services. Seven out of the nine organizations involved in this research were heavily invested in ensuring that they work with other nonprofit partners to accomplish their mutual goals. In describing these partnerships many of the participants oscillated between the uses of the assumed “we” to the use of the transcendent “we” to show their close partnerships and what it means.

Partnerships with other nonprofit organizations were one of the most reoccurring themes in the data. All the participants indicated how their organizations or programs work closely with other organizations to receive funding and to provide services to their beneficiaries. The use of the assumed “we” was, however, always reserved to show how the participant and his/her organization work with the other organizations as illustrated in
the following quotation: “we probably write about 70 grants a year. A lot of our grants might have somewhere between 1-5 other partners in them” (Kate). In this quotation the participant used the assumed “we” to include herself in her organization as they work with other organizations to write grants. The use of the “we” is thus meant to show her organization on one part and the other organizations on the other side of the partnership.

One example comes from George, who described what it means to be among a coalition of organizations providing specific services. “We know we all need to succeed if we succeed and the others don’t succeed then the programs as a whole will not succeed.” In this example George alternated between the assumed and the transcendent “we” to show need for individual organizational success. The first use of the pronoun “we” was a reference to the network of organizations offering similar services as did George’s organization. By using the transcendent “we” George attempted to show that he understood that his organization belong to a group of organizations that were working towards common goals.

The next use of the “we” referred back to George’s own organization and what they were doing and part of this coalition of organization working on issues affecting the aged. He qualified the second use of the “we” by making a distinction between his organization and the others “if we succeed and the others don’t then the program as a whole will not succeed.” The interchangeable meanings of the “we” showed George’s identification with his organization and the partner organizations that he worked collaborated with.
Identification with Stakeholders through the Use of Self-labels

The labels that were used by participants to show their relationships with other stakeholders were limited. The frequent labels were peers and partners to show their common interests and collaborative efforts. One significant label used by a participant when describing other organizations providing similar services was that of a puzzle. The use of the label puzzle was the participant’s way of showing how all those providing specific services needed to fulfill their part in order to solve the puzzle. The participant indicated that “we are one piece of the puzzle,” an indication that John identified with the group of organizations in his cohort that provide the same services. He was also aware that the total success of his weatherization program was dependent on the performance of other weatherization programs around the state and the country. This point was important to John because the continued funding of the weatherization program dependent a lot on whether its advocates can justify it in the next round of budget debate in Washington DC.

Again it is important not to limit the evidence of identification by grant-funded employees and their stakeholders only through the prisms of the use of the assumed “we” or self-labels. In the rest of this chapter I examined the other themes that showed the type of identification between grant-funded employees and other stakeholders in their organizations.

The Relationship between Grant-funded Employees and their Board of Directors

The interview protocol did not include any questions about the role of board of directors in the interviewees’ organizations. Yet, this theme emerged as the participants talked about other issues related to their roles in their organizations. The interviewees
offer glimpses into the boardrooms of these organizations and the complex relationships between board member and grant-funded employees. The data show the relationships between grant-funded employees and their board of directors as a partnership characterized by the struggle to dictate the direction of the organization and sometimes incongruence of vision for the organization. In this section, I discuss four references made by grant-funded employees about their board of directors, and how they describe their relationships.

The relationship between boards of directors and grant-funded employees is a mixed one. Participants noted both the good and the dicey relationships. Take the case of Victor, who in his response to a question about grants offered this narrative of an incident involving his board members.

I know when we were aware that we were take big funding hits, I suggested to the board and the board agreed that, we had some reserved money, and so the suggestion was okay, grant A is going to end here, we could at that time say, “I am sorry grant A person you to go.” Grant B ends here, and we could use some reserve to continue funding that person. Why don’t we say let’s keep grant A person on and use the reserve so that we can have both people going. We won’t be able to keep both but eventually we will end up using reserve to keep both people on. We will not be able to keep the staff as long if we are funding both of them but “should we do that?” and they said “yes.” So that made clear to the people in those positions that we going to try and take of both of you as long as
we can. We did not have the issue of someone feeling that they were being jettison to safe this other person.

This scenario illustrates the collaborative efforts that can sometimes be found between nonprofit workers and their board of directors. In this case the board agreed to use reserve funds to sustain the position of the workers in the organization. Victor saw this as a good working relationship between himself and the board. Here we see a board that was ready to work with their employee to ensure that they have the needed human resource to accomplish their goals. This was, however, a temporary fix to the problem and the grant-funded employees were eventually laid-off.

An interesting point was that one of the employees who were eventually laid-off in this organization was a participant in this research, and she blamed the board for the loss of her job. She said “I was mad at the board because I felt like they were not ready to help.” As far as she was concerned the board of directors did not work hard enough to save her job. Maybe they did, maybe they did not; may be the executive director did not communicate clearly with her about what the board of directors agreed to do. In any case, these two differing perspectives demonstrate the complicated relationships that these employees had with their board of directors. The world of grant-funded employment is fraught with uncertainty that when not handled well can lead to misunderstandings as shown in this case. The effort that the board of directors put in to save the jobs of these employees in the face of the financial difficulties seemed to have not been communicated effectively to them, thereby creating bad relationships between them.
Boards of directors were also described as important in ensuring the success of the organizations they served. Take the case of Janet who, while talking about her relationship with the beneficiaries of her services, added this:

Our board is also people in the community and they are also committed to helping our community so I look at them as a tool for them to achieve this. I don’t look at them as a faction against me. I look at them as a tool to help me to achieve what we do.

In this description Janet labeled her board members as “people in the community” and “a tool.” These labels could be interpreted as an attempt to show that the board members were familiar with the community being members. They therefore understand what was going on in the community and what needed to happen. As “a tool” the board members were seen by Janet as facilitators who were essential in the success of the organization. A careful examination of Janet’s statement gives the impression that all was not well between the board and the members of the organization. The statement “I don’t see them as a faction against me” gives the impressions of possible power struggles between her and the board.

The theme of the difficulties involved with working with board of directors is captured by John as he described the relationship between the staff and the board of directors of his organization:

This organization and the funding sources have certainly slowed me down a little bit. I have great ambition and goals that I will like to see accomplished but there are certain constraints within grant-funded programs. And a lot of the reporting
requirements are complicated and so you cannot always move with the speed that you want in for profit. In a for-profit a decision is made and is implemented pretty much seamlessly. Whereas once you make a decision here in a grant-funded environment, it takes a while to get a buy in from all the interested parties before you can actually move forward on implementing any changes. And that is a little frustrating but that is the reality in grant-funded nonprofits.

It is a combination of funders and the organization. Some of it is definitely due to the restrictions set out by the funders but we have a very complicated board structures here also. We have a 51 member board. And the folks that sit on our board are from member agencies, and their desires don’t always align so it is sometimes difficult to get the needed support to move in the direction that you want to move.

We have had instances where the organization and the staff want to move in a particular organization and the board of directors wanted to move in another direction.

There is a certain level of risk averseness to the board but that is their job, but sometimes there is more of risk averseness than there should be.

You have to spend money to make money.

John’s observations suggest that there were some fundamental differences between the board and the staff of the organization even if they shared the same goals. The staff that usually bear the brunt of the vicissitudes of grants are looking for ways to make the organization more financially secure but the board was averse to risk. The question that
this statement raises in our understanding of organizational identification is: What happens in situations where organizational identification is forged by antithesis but there are differences in how to deal with that common adversary? At this point it becomes an issue of power. Who has the power to decide on the method that must be used to address the common problem? In this case is the power lies with the board of directors, because they are ultimately responsible for the functioning of the organization. One can therefore see many Johns in nonprofit organizations struggling to come to terms with their disagreements with their board of directors.

Identifying with other Nonprofits

The research participants all expressed the fact that they see their organizations and themselves as being part of a broader coalition working towards poverty alleviation. They saw other nonprofit organization as significant partners in their quests to deal with the issue of poverty; they were all “part of the puzzle”. These relationships manifest themselves in the form of triaging of services and depend on each other to secure funding. “We probably write about 70 grants a year” said Kate, “A lot of our grants might have somewhere from one-five other partners in them. So there is another layer of financial oversight and administration that we’ve created for ourselves.” Kate a member of a community network organization writes several grants in partnerships with a lot of local community organizations. This collaborative effort helps them to present a strong case for their projects.

This level of collaboration is facilitated by the fact that these organizations see themselves as having common values and goals. The complex nature of working on a
common funding and common project is largely dependent on how aligned the goals and objectives are of the organizations working together. By choosing who to bring into the pool to apply for grants, organizations define their in and out groups. The decision to come together as a group to get a common grant can be seen as a self-categorization process that distinguishes one network of organizations against other organizations that may not be undertaking similar projects (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

In some instances these collaborative efforts are engineered by the funding agencies. The saliency of an organization is therefore dependent on their ability to form the right partnerships to get the grants. Mavis, who has experience with an environmental organization, illustrates this trend in grant funding.

The primary funders are the US Forest Foundation. And they are an organization created out of settlement between US and Canada. Because the Canadians were cutting timber and selling it to the US cheaper than what we could do here so there was some kind of settlement like $300 million. But this endowment originally had $125 million. But they created this foundation to work specifically on communities to work on forestry projects. So rather than put them in small grants into those communities they wanted to create these zones and invest a couple of million dollars and do some multi-state work but where the states are like homogenous so we are with like Tennessee, Kentucky, WV, parts of Virginia and Appalachian Ohio so we have similar forests similar issues.

In this case we see a funding agency compelling organizations to build coalitions in order to receive funding. The significance of each organization is thus tied to its association
with other organizations. Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail (1994) argue that saliency is facilitated by the creation of distinctive organizational characteristics which in turn enhances identification. Mavis and her organization therefore identify with the group of organizations to create this common front for the protection of the environment in order to get funding from the foundation. This coalition means that Mavis and her organization see themselves not just as a local community organization but as belonging to a network of multiple organizations that are working together on environmental issues.

It takes a certain level of identification to work with other nonprofit organizations. Ultimately it is the fact that these organizations identify themselves as nonprofits working together on common goals that bring them together. It is this identification with each other that serves as a common link that binds them together.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have examined the relationships between grant-funded employees and their stakeholders. Using the research questions as a guide, the chapter explored how grant-funded employees described their relationships with identification targets in their nonprofit organizations and what these relationships mean to them. The analysis was based on different steps starting with open coding to identify and analyze the transcendent/ assumed “we,” the use of self-labels and meanings that grant-funded employees assign to those labels, and an inductive approach to thematic analysis. It was evident through the analysis that the participants identify more strongly with their organizations and the beneficiaries of their services. And this phenomenon can be attributed to identification through antithesis. The desire to helps people overcome
poverty seems to be the overriding factor in defining their identification processes. The next chapter examines the theoretical and practical implications of this research as well as the limitations and the opportunities they offer for future research. It ends with a conclusion that summarizes the finding of this dissertation.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

The answers to the research questions bring to the fore several themes that are essential in our understanding of organizational identification, liminality and the nonprofit sector. The chapter seeks to examine the main motivating factors behind why the grant-funded employees in this study chose to identify with certain organizational targets within their organizations. The chapter also examines some of the theoretical as well as practical implications of the study. It concludes with limitations and future research directions and a summary of the whole study.

Liminality and its Impact on Grant-funded Employees

The initial decision to use liminality as a conceptual framework to understand grant-funded employees in nonprofits was based on observations and research that showed that their statuses in organizations are not clearly defined. The data from this study however show that their liminality is more complex than just being in an ill-defined position in an organization. Ideological and organizational structures for instance also place them in liminal positions. The discussions of the liminal positions of grant-funded employees and their organizational identification also bring to the fore the issue of uncertainty embedded in being in a liminal position. In the first section of this chapter I review the literature on uncertainty theory as a means to explicate the position of grant-funded employees and to understand why some still choose to identify with their organizations.

As the history of the work lives of some of the participants in this study to be in a liminal position is to be in a state of uncertainty. Being in a liminal position is to be in a
state of uncertainty is because of the fact that in an uncertain state one cannot predict the future or have a sense of less control over his/her environment (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004; DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Milliken, 1987). The loss of control over what the future holds for an individual as a result of for instance not knowing whether a grant will be renewed could be frustrating to anyone as was in the case of Irene and other participants in this study.

The concept of uncertainty has mostly been used by many organizational scholars to describe the state of workers when they are in unstable environments (Buono & Bowditch, 1989; Schweiger & Denisi, 1991). The literature on uncertainty in organizations has focused on what causes uncertainty in organizations and how that affects the decisions making processes of organizational members. Changes in organizations in the form of restructuring, close downs, mergers and changes in policies lead to uncertainty among organizational members that in turn affect the way they relate to their organizations (Desveaux, 1994; Schweiger & Denisi, 1991; Terry, Callan, & Sartori, 1996).

Uncertainty has several consequences that affect the lives of organizational members. Uncertainty leads to a loss of control, helplessness and stress (Greenberger & Strasser, 1986; Martinko & Gardner, 1982). Being in a state of uncertainty is not being in control of your environment and this can lead to a lot of discomfort for a lot of people. Many organizations experience high turnover rates as a result of uncertainty (Greenhalph & Sutton, 1991). Uncertainty in organizations although maybe exciting to some people generally, it places members in positions that are on many occasions less desirable.
The discussion in the field of communication over uncertainty is a more complex. The shift from the uncertainty reduction theory proposed by Berger & Calabrese (1975) to the focus on the acceptability of uncertainty among some people (Babrow, 2001; Brashers, 2001) shows the complexity of uncertainty. A third way to examine uncertainty is to look at it in terms of its meaning to the people experiencing it (Goldman, 2001). Our understanding of uncertainty therefore offers us clues into why people choose to behave in a particular way given their circumstances.

This review of literature on uncertainty is to help in making sense of the decision making processes of the grant-funded employees in this study and their identification processes. As I have already argued, uncertainty is a key component of liminality. The liminal position is a position that is constraining and unpredictable. As the experiences of the participants in this research shows, it is difficult to predict the outcome of an individual jobs security at the end of a grant cycle. The “ebb and flow” of the system makes it difficult for some of them to make up their minds about whether they should seek new employment as they get close to the end of their grant cycles. The story told by Karla about their battle with the state legislators over a provision to continue to fund her project is an example of the unpredictability of being a grant-funded employee. As their lobbyists continue to work on their behalf, her workers were in a state of uncertainty about their future of their jobs. The same things could be said of Irene, who was not sure after an extension of her grant what will happen at the end of the extension.
Time, Context and the Liminal Worker

The liminality among the grant-funded employees in the study did not start at the beginning of their employment with the organization. Although the participants were clear that the organization told potential employees at the time of hiring that their positions were grant-funded and therefore there were no job security guarantees, in many instances it did not matter until their grant cycles were about to end that the liminality and the uncertainty intensifies.

As Victor puts “it doesn’t matter if you had a conversation that this is a grant-funded position, and you understand that in 12 months you might not have a job, 12 months later it does not matter if you have it, you still feel horrible when you have to tell the person I am sorry.” Steven’s problem with laying people off is that “you develop relationship with that person and you want to create an effective working environment. It is very difficult.” The uncertainty of jobs security thus affects both those whose jobs are relatively secured and those who are not. As Francis the executive director puts it:

I don’t mind firing somebody. Firing somebody is easy. When you lay them off, you feel like something I could have done differently to ensure that they kept their job. It is hard because people worry about that. Even though they know it is not going happen a lot of the grants we have are renewed every two years. And even though we know we are going to get it, that staff they still get worried that ‘if we don’t get it I have lost my job’

It is after people have been employed that they begin to see themselves as being between temporally and fulltime employment.
The data also show some variations between the type of uncertainty experienced by those in the middle and upper management levels and those in at the entry levels. The participants who occupied middle and upper levels of the organization expressed less worry about the safety of their jobs. Here is Karla again this time talking about her job when I asked her about ending of grant cycles “I am the manager of the program, I can see that happening many months in advance…. I had another project that I work on so I knew my job was safe but what about my assistant and she knew that this maybe it.” Kate boldly stated that “I have never felt job insecure. I always feel secure but that is not to say that others don’t live with that anxiety.” Victor was the only person with a job after funding cuts had eliminated the three positions under him. The primary concerned about this group of employees was not about the security of their positions but those of their employees.

The same cannot be said of the participants who occupied lower levels of the organization. Martha almost lost her job but for another school getting funding; Angela had just lost a job and was glad to have one but continues to see that position as temporary because it is a five year grant. And then there is the case of Irene who was still uncertain about the security of her job.

Tenure in the workplace does play a significant part in determining the uncertainty experienced by grant-funded employees. Those that have been in their organizations for 25 years as was the case of Francis, or 23 years as was the case of Janet and occupy higher position experience a sense of job security while the new employees feel the pangs of liminality and it uncertainties more strongly. This phenomenon is
serious enough that Kate, asked me to organize a forum to discuss it. She was worried that the nonprofit sector was losing a lot of talented employees due to budget cuts and its resultant lay-offs new and younger employees. She wanted to know how to retain new talents in the sector in the face of budget problems.

_Liminality and Identification Negotiation_

In her use of the concept of liminality Garsten (1999) placed temporary workers between core and periphery position in their organizations. This was because they although they work in the organization they do not enjoy the same benefits as full time employees. The grant-funded employees in this study were employed as fulltime workers but they all have an understanding that their positions were tenuous. However they chose to strongly identify with their organizations and clients but kept their grantors at a distance. Part of the reason for the strong identification with their organizations could be due to the fact that spend a lot of time with their organization and as Barker and Tompkins (1994) the time spent with the organization fosters identification as was the case of Joana, who during the member check interview admitted to having stronger identification with the community action agency she was working with. The same could be said of the clients that these participants serve. As they spend more time with them, they develop relationships which in turn promote identification. Hence in the face of uncertainty in job security and other liminal challenges, these participants chose to identify with their organizations and clients.

The identification with other stakeholders such as other organizations and the board of directors although strong could not be compared to that of the organizations and
clients. These stakeholders were important in the scheme of things. For instance, as John point out, he is a “piece of the puzzle” as the organizations doing similar work attempt to fulfill their mandates to avoid the loss of funding. The boards of directors were also important because of their roles as heads of the organizations. However, the level of identification with these stakeholders could not be compared with that of the one for the organization and the clients.

The story is however different with the grantors. The uncertainty with grantors was a major concern with the participants. The perception supported by experience that the funding could cease anytime, seems to reduce the tendency to identify with grantors. The relationships seemed to be based on partnerships to accomplish specific goals and once the goals are achieved there was no need to maintain that relationship. Even the relationships between long time funders such as the state were unreliable because sometimes the budget cuts were “bloody” (Francis). Keeping grantors partners at an earshot distance seemed to be the right thing to do give the fact that the relationship with them is marked by uncertainty.

A close examination of the reasons for the strong identification by grant-funded employees with their organizations and clients is more than just due to the time they spend with them or the jobs they provide. This is because almost all the participants were clear about the uncertainty that they experience in their work as liminal workers. The word “scary” pervades their experiences of the nonprofit sector and although some people may be deriving some benefits from this rush of uncertainty, it is definitely not a comfortable place to be. The desire to maintain strong identification with the organization
and the clients seems to have been fuelled by a much stronger factor, identification through antithesis.

**Identification through Antithesis**

The descriptions of the participants' identification with their organizations can also be explained through the lenses of Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT argues that individuals show their identification with an organization by placing themselves and their organizations in particular categories and accentuating the differences between them and the others (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). When an organization distinguishes itself from other organizations it members are more likely to have stronger identification with that organization (Hall & Schneider, 1972). Elsbach and Bhattacharya (2001) argued that the accentuation of positive factors of one’s organization and the exposition of the negatives of other or “rival” organizations enhances the identification processes between an organization and its members. Participants in this research tried to distinguish themselves from people in other lines. They saw their work as “exciting” not like the mundane work others do “like selling shirts” and as an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others. Through self-categorization the participants socially distinguished their work from those of other organizations (Kawakami & Dion, 1995). Many of the participants made it clear that the nature of their work was unlike other business which was repetitive and lack the use of imagination. Sales and manufacturing were the two sectors that participants went at length to distinguished themselves from “if we were not here we will be selling shirts”; “we don’t make widgets here”. The emphasis on the participants on the
uniqueness of the nonprofit sector was the means by which they justified why they have chosen to work with their organizations.

Participants thus credited their excitement about their work to the challenges of sustaining their jobs and the challenge of finding creative solutions to community problems. It was ironic that the very sources of their stress were also the sources of their excitement. For instance many saw the quest for grants and figuring out budget issues as interesting. This was because it forced them to be creative in securing and managing their finances. The natures of the services that these organizations provide expose their members to a cross section of community members with varied needs and requests. The challenges of meeting the needs of their clients, the participants claimed means that they had to be creative and also be prepared for unusual requests. Thus the very nature of finding solutions to community problems is both challenging and exciting at the same time.

Another source of self-categorization that many participants alluded to was “helping people.” The desire to help people seemed to be the overriding factor for participants’ strong identification with their organizations. Their organizations provided them with the opportunity to do what they wanted to do, which was to help people in need. Being the business of helping people is a self-categorization mechanism that unites people from multiple backgrounds together (Pratt, 1998). In this case identification through antithesis was one of the common factors that showed why the participants chose to work for the nonprofit sector. Cheney (1992) argue that organizations sometimes create common enemies who become the source of a stronger identification among
organizational members. In this case the common enemies of “poverty” and “want” were quite visible and the organizations did not have to do much to promote their members around that cause.

All the participants indicated a strong desire to work on issues of poverty and their organizations were the means to achieving this goal. Working in nonprofit organizations was therefore like forming a team to deal with the menace of poverty. The identification through antithesis was thus a major finding in this research and it suggests that the ability of an organization to create an antithesis rooted in helping to address issues affecting the human condition the more likely they are to generate strong identification among their members.

**Identification and Socialization**

The formulation of strong identification with their organizations through antithesis could be argued to have been the result of organizational and vocational socialization. The participants could be divided into two camps: 1) those socialized by their families and communities to be interested in working with organizations that help others and 2) those looking for jobs and were socialized to think of their organizations and what they do with new set of eyes. None of the socialization processes outlined by Jablin (2001) could be said to be dominant. Instead there were several combinations of socialization processes that helped to shape the perceptions of the role of the participants’ organizations. For instance, Kate indicated that before joining Jancot Network she was socialized to work on issues of social justice. Her socialization process was therefore that of investiture since the organization did not seek to strip her off her ideas before
indoctrinating her. However, in the course of her stay with the organization she was informally socialized to be a team player rather than a lone world changer. She described her socialization this way, “Some of the biggest changes in the last 20 or 30 years for me has been getting a sense of how to engage through collaboration and through the development of network to create social change” (Kate).

On the other hand, Steven came to his organization with very little background knowledge of how the nonprofit sector works, but within a few months of working there he got to identify with the organization and what it does. “I was introduced into the nonprofit world when I came to Step Up” he said “and the notion of grant funding I didn’t really know what that meant. I did not understand the cycles and the ebb and flow. All that was brand new but fairly quickly you get into that mindset. Wow this is a little different… And as it so happen, my vision and the organization’s vision grew together.” Like Kate, Steven went through an evolutionary process to become a strong advocate for his organizations, although he and Kate entered their organizations with different backgrounds and interests.

Sharing of Responsibilities through Identification

The type and reasons for the identification expounded by the participants showed a deep interest in both the aspirations and the success of their organizations. They viewed the success of their organizations as their success and failures as theirs as well. The identification of the participants with their organizations could therefore be classified as a social identity in which the fate of the organization was tied to that of the individual
(Tolman, 1943). There was a sense of shared responsibilities and rewards between the participants and their organizations.

Here again, the ultimate factor for the strong identification with their organizations in the data was antithesis of poverty; the desire by each participant to contribute in their own way towards extending a hand of help to others. It is important to point out that the strong identification with the represented nonprofit organizations because of what they do were not described by the participants as self-enhancement antecedents. The meaning for the stronger identification with organizations as ascribed by the participants do not wholly conform to Dutton et al. (1994) postulations about what promotes identification among members of organizations. Sure, one could argue that there was a certain level of prestige as argued by Mael and Ashforth (1992) that may be a contributory factor in this identification process. However, the structures that the representative organizations work in as well as the descriptions of the participants gave little clues that the traditional notion of self-enhancement as proposed by Dutton et. al. had much to with the reason for their identification with their organizations.

All the participants indicated how low their wages were and the lack of resources for their programs and infrastructure. One participant, Jesse, said he had resigned himself to having an office space without doors or walls, even though he was the head of his division. Another, Joana, indicated that her dad’s calculations showed that her allowance was way below minimum wage and that she had had to sign up for government assistance in the form of food stamps to survive. But the organizational identification of these
participants was not necessarily hinged on money or prestige. It was something far deeper than the material resources although material resources were important to them.

The phenomenon of subjugating one’s self interest and comfort to an organization with the goal to serving a community falls within the category of the \textit{transcending self}. Organizational scholars have long argued that one of the best ways of ensuring the success and intrinsic rewards in an organization is by getting members to reach a point of readiness to sacrifice for the sake of their organizations and the people they serve (Crandall, 1980; Frankl, 1978; Rawls, 1971). Mael and Ashforth (2001) argue that the theory of transcending self explains why people identify with organizations and work to help others. In this scenario the motivation of the individual is to sow into the lives of people and communities with the hope that their seeds will bear fruits well into the future (Katz & Khan, 1978).

This research contributes to our understanding of the nature of the transcending self. All the participants in the research were ready to serve their communities through their organizations. Their identifications with their organizations were therefore based on the desire and willingness to subject themselves to various inconveniences to accomplish these goals. The descriptions of the working conditions and circumstances under which many of the participants worked gave the impression that one means to survive in their work environment was by having the spirit and desire to transcend one’s self into helping others. One does not need to go to the military or religion to find examples of people willing to identify with organizations as a means to transcend themselves, a close examination of people engaged in the nonprofit sector such as the participants in this
research show examples of people who sacrifice in their own small ways to help others thereby transcending themselves.

In summary, the strong identification between participants and their organizations as expressed through the use of the assumed “we,” self-labels and other descriptions is an indication of how the values of the research participants were aligned to those of their organizations. The data showed that although participants were quick to point out the lack of resources in their organization and their constant struggles to sustain their jobs and programs, they were still happy to be doing what they were doing. The meanings that they ascribe to their stronger identification with their organizations showed deeper commitments to the causes of their organizations. The commitments to the organizational causes were demonstrated by the willingness and desire of the participants to pursue similar lines of work if they were not with their organizations. The identification of grant-funded employees in the research could be said to transcend that of their organizations, but their organizations were critical parts of the equation hence their identifications with them.

Theoretical Implications

Organizational and communication scholars have examined the organizational identification of different groups. Their research have focused on full time workers, volunteers, part-time workers, sports fans, soldiers and people in transition due to changes in their organizational structures (Bullis & Bach, 1989; Garsten, 1999; Gossett, 2002; Mael & Ashforth, 2001). This research adds to this body of work by examining the organizational identification of a group of workers, grant-funded employees in nonprofit
organizations, whose tenure in their organizations are not clearly defined because of an over dependence on external funding to sustain their jobs. Their unique positions as workers have given us an understanding of what it means to be providing services that are considered by many as important but also vulnerable because they could discontinued.

It was evident in this research that socialization, as a communicative process, plays a significant role promoting organizational identification (Jablin, 2001). Participants in this research did not indicate strong overt attempts by their organizations to promote identification. Many of the participants in the research indicated that their environments had a significant impact on their decisions to work in the nonprofit sector. Exposing people to certain conditions could have a lasting impact on them and cause them to identify with organizations and others that are also concerned about the same issues. The strong identification indicated by the participants was in part due to the opportunities they had prior and during their work with their organizations to see the levels of poverty and what needed to be addressed in their communities. Exposing people to situations as part of the socialization process is thus significant in promoting strong identification between people and organizations with similar goals.

The lesson from the participants in this research underscored the importance of the fostering of organizational identification through antithesis (Cheney, 1983). It enhances our understanding of the power of the creation of an antithesis whether as a strategic mechanism or by coincident can promote strong organizational identification among members of an organization. This is especially true in cases of antithesis that are
linked to human survival. The creation of the perception of constant “battle” with the “enemy” of both the organization and its members could be a source of constant watering of the need for identification. In this case, by making “poverty” the enemy of the organization, its members and all the other stakeholders, the grant-funded employees had strong identification with their organizations and their missions. By framing the enemy as the cause of the woes of the clients, members of the represented organizations were ready to continue the battle against poverty in spite of lackluster working environment.

Closely related to the above is the significance of willingness to do something for humanity. Dutton et. al., (1994) argue that identification is likely to be stronger in cases where the organization is distinct from other organizations. This is true among the organization featured in this study in that they provide services that for instance public sector organizations do not offer. However, what this research show is that the participants stronger identification with their organizations was just not due to the fact that they were distinct from other organizations, it was because their organizations offered them the opportunity to transcend themselves in their service to their clients. The opportunity for transcending oneself is a powerful factor in promoting identification (Ashforth & Mael, 1996). And this process of self transcendence is enacted by the willingness of the participants to do what it takes to provide services to their communities.

The ways in which the participants negotiate their identification among the various identification targets also tells us a lot about what factors are considered important by employees in the identification process. I was surprised to find a weak
identification between grant-funded employees and their grantors. I went into this research thinking that as partners with similar goals grantees and grantors will seek opportunities to promote a strong identification between them. However the limited communication between them and the understanding that the partnership could end with funding cuts or a shift in the goals of each party makes this identification process less effective. Thus the possibility of continual partnership could be said to be a significant factor in the identification process.

This study relied on multiple steps in its analysis to fully understand the identification processes of grant-funded employees in nonprofits. The use of thematic analysis in addition to the examination of the assumed or transcendent “we” was to avoid the mistake of confusing for instance organizational membership with identification. Having multiple steps in identification analysis is thus significant in an in-depth analysis of organizational identification of members of organizations.

In summary, this research expands our understanding of organizational identification by showing that the linking of an antithesis with an opportunity for people to transcend themselves is a powerful identification factor. It underscores the importance of communication in socializing people to understand the issues facing their communities thereby making it possible for them to identify with certain identification targets. In this case, the need to serve and the likelihood of short term partnerships were significant in promoting and discouraging identification respectively.
Practical Implications

Communication is a vital component of the identification processes in organizations. It takes communication to get people to a point where they want to identify with an organization in spite of the challenges such as not being assured of the security of their jobs. This study underscores the significance of awareness creation either directly or indirectly to promote identification between people and organizations to work together to address issues of public concern. The study shows that the ability of nonprofits to promote identification among their members to reap the benefits of commitment and loyalty, they need to get their members to understand the implications of their contributions to the causes that they champion.

It was also evident in this research that there was an information gap between middle and upper personnel and lower level employees in the represented organizations about grants. The middle and upper level personnel mostly communicated with grantors and seemed to know a lot about the grant cycles and the budget. Many of the lower level employees indicated that they know about the stipulations of their grants but nothing more than that. By providing more information to lower level employees, upper and middle level managers can avoid some of the tensions that do arise among employees about conditions of service.

In the same vein it also important to ensure effective communication between employees and board members. The sentiments expressed by some of the participants about disconnection between boards and their organizations can be ameliorated by giving employees and board members more opportunities to interact with each other and to
share their visions for their organizations. Doing this may help to foster stronger identification between them which in turn can help to effectively promote the goals of the organization.

Building relationships between grantors and grantees seems to be a winning strategy for some of the organizations represented in this research. The types of communications between grantors and grantees as reported by the participants in this research show a minimal communication to get the stipulated job done by both parties. The experiences of some of the organizations in this research show that frequent interactions and communication between grantors and grantees can help promote strong relationships which in turn can lead to more cooperation between them. Nonprofit organizations must therefore find when appropriate to engage their grantees, to activity facilitate identification with them. This is because a stronger identification with their grantors could result in commitment to their goals which may be reflected in continual funding of their projects.

This research also shows that the ability to communicate the need to serve a community either directly or indirectly by an organization to its members could generate a powerful force in the promotion of strong identification among some people. It is therefore important that this tool for identification is not abused by some to promote their self interests. Ethical considerations must therefore guide the use of human needs as an antithesis in the promotion of organizational identification among members of organizations.
Communication is important in fostering organizational identification. Nonprofit organizations must therefore take active steps to use communication to promote identification between themselves and their members as well as partners to ensure commitment, loyalty and funding for their projects. However, due to the nature of their work in human services, and the powerful emotions that could generate among people, they must follow some ethical guidelines to avoid the abuse of their power.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research offers interesting insight into the identification processes of grant-funded employees and what it means to them. As with any research this study has its limitations but these also present opportunities for future research. Because this study involved only sixteen employees it is possible that there are other important themes that were not found here but could be evident with more interviews. However the participants in this study represent a wide range of organizations, positions, and tenure in their organizations. Moreover, I settled on this number of participants after I reached saturation in the data. Future research in the area could use more interviews or could draw on focus groups to gather information about how grant-funded employees express their organizational identification in conversation with others.

The second limitation of this research is that it was limited to nonprofit organizations located in rural Appalachia. Although this could be considered a limitation I also see it as having afforded me an opportunity to interview people in a region that needs a lot of study as it struggles to overcome economic challenges. This study provides description of the challenges faced by nonprofits in a rural area. In the future I will like to
study grant-funded employees in a city setting to see some of the similarities and
differences in the experiences in the nonprofit sector of the rural and urban grant-funded
employees.

This study also only examined the concept of organizational identification from
the perspective of grant-funded employees. It will be interesting to examine the topic
from the perspectives of the organizations and their clients. For instance, one issue that
could be examined is the extent to which clients identify with the organizations that serve
them. This is because by understanding the identification processes of clients, we will
understand whether they also see themselves as partners dealing with the issue of
poverty.

The data from this research showed very little conscious and formal attempt by
the represented organizations in actively promoting organizational identification among
their members yet the participants in the research understood very well what their
organizations were doing and their role in them. Future research could examine how
subtle messages are communicated and reinforced within organizations to promote
identification. Such a study will yield invaluable information on how to promote strong
identification within organizations without necessarily resulting to overt rhetorical tactics.

A possible research area stemming from this research is to explore how
organizations assess and celebrate their accomplishments. This future research topic is
significant because the key forces of identification are the creation of an antithesis and
the desire of the participants in transcending themselves. Hence research into how the
members of organizations analyze their handiwork and what it does to them is important in helping to create environments that continue to reward them for their actions.

Conclusion

This research focused on the identification of grant-funded employees in nonprofits organizations. The importance of the nonprofits sector to communities and the economy as a whole is unequivocal. Yet as critical as this sector is to millions of people, its sustainability is fragile due to the unreliability of grants. It is a sector that holds, individuals, families and communities together yet it is often in a continual state of fight for survival. Caught in the middle of this funding uncertainty are grant-funded employees who depend on grant funding both for their sustenance and the services they offer to others. The grant-funded employees do not have to worry about only their job security but also the consequences of a loss of funding on their clients. The turmoil in the nonprofit sector although known to many, have not received much attention in terms of how it affect individual workers and what that means to their organizational identification. This study was therefore an attempt to start a discussion about what it means to be working in a “critical” sector that is sometime not fully accorded its full recognition.

The nonprofits sector unequivocally serves many people. The survival of many people particularly the poor are highly dependents on the services the sector provide. Unfortunately, it is very easy to discontinue the funding of the sector with the excuse that many of the beneficiaries of the services can find other sources of support in other areas.
By focusing on the identification of it regularly employed workers instead of volunteers, one could get at what makes people want to work in a sector that is crucial yet unstable.

This research has shown that in spite of the less than perfect circumstances in which grant-funded employees in the research found themselves, they were willing to forge strong identification with their organizations and clients. The factors that mostly accounted for this strong identification with these stakeholders were the creation of the antithesis of poverty and the desire of the participants to engage in activities that transcended themselves. The research showed that getting members of organizations to the point where they believe their work makes a difference in the lives of people is a powerful factor in the organizational identification process.

In drawing these conclusions, I am not oblivious of studies that have indicated the high turnover rates among nonprofit workers due to burn-outs, low remunerations and other factors. All these factors were acknowledged by the participants in the research however, most of them were ready to work in other organizations with similar missions and goals. Arguably this was an indication of the strength of their belief in what they were doing.

The multiple identification targets in nonprofit organizations obviously present grant-funded employees with choices and this research showed that the decision by these group of workers to strongly identify with one target as against another was largely determined by the organizations they were working for, those they were serving and why they chose to work in the nonprofit sector.
It is also important to point out that this study was done at a time when many organizations were laying-off workers because of budget cuts. The national unemployment level is above 10% and in the area where this study took place the rate is even higher. It is therefore easy for someone not working in a nonprofit organization to identify with the experiences of the participants in this research because they may be experiencing liminality in their place of work. This is understandable, as I have already indicated, liminality is a concept that I employed to help me make sense of the work of the grant-funded employees in this study and it could be applicable in other situations too. However, the uniqueness of these grant-funded employees in this study stems from the fact that unlike those who are employed fulltime in other organizations they were employed with a warning label “your job may end at the end of the grant cycle.” The levels of uncertainty in the absence of an economic crisis such as the one pervading at the time of writing this dissertation, is more pronounced among grant-funded employees in small nonprofit organizations.
REFERENCES


http://nccsdataweb.urban.org/kbfiles/797/Almanac2008publicCharities.pdf


185
Collaboration and conflict (pp. 3-29). Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press.


The Foundation Center (2008). FC stats- grants. Retrieved, January, 21, 2009 from the Foundation Center website:


http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311373_nonprofit_sector.pdf


Thank you for agreeing to do this interview with me. My name is Ephraim Kotey Nikoi the principal researcher for this research. This study focuses on the identification of grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations. It is designed to explore how the various stakeholders in nonprofit organizations influence the organizational identification of their grant-funded employees. Your participation will help in shedding light on the relationships between those who work on grant-projects and the nonprofits that they work for. In this interview I am interested in understanding how you see yourself in relation to the nonprofit organization you work for. This interview will therefore focus on what being grant-funded employee means to you and your relationships with other stakeholders both within and outside the organization. I will like to also inform you that this interview will be recorded for data analysis purposes.

Please do you have any question about this research? Before we move to the questions, I will like to take a minute to have you sign the consent form to indicate that I have described the research to you and that you are prepared to be a participant.
Interview Questions

8. How long have you been working with this organization?
   - What motivated you to work for this organization?
   - What is your role in the organization?
   - What are the goals and mission of this organization?
   - What do these goals and mission mean to you?
   - In what ways would you say you have changed since joining this organization?
   - What does being a member of this organization mean to you?

9. What agency(s) fund the program you are currently working on?
   - How will you describe the mission and goals of the granting agency (s)?
   - Describe the mechanisms used by the granting agency to communicate their objectives to you?
   - How will you describe the working relationship between you and the granting agency?
   - How will you describe the working relationships between the granting agency and your organization?
   - What does working on grant projects mean to you?

10. Who are the beneficiaries of the program you are working on?
    - How will you describe your relationship with these clients?
    - What does working with the beneficiaries of your services mean to you?

11. Describe some of the people and/or organizations that are important to you in your line of work?
    - Why are these people and/or organizations relevant in your line of work?
    - What does working with multiple stakeholders mean to you?

12. What is the best thing about working as a grant-funded employee?

13. What is the worst thing about working as grant-funded employee?

14. Is there anything that you will like me to know about working on grant projects that I have not already asked?

   Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX B
MEMBER CHECK PROTOCOL

Name of Participant: _________________
Date of Phone Call: _________________

I am writing up my analysis of the data I collected from you and other participants on my research on the organizational identification of grant-funded employees in nonprofit organizations. I have reached some conclusions based on the data and will like to ask you a few questions about my interpretations of the data.

1. In the interview for my research you said __________ I have interpreted that as ________. Is that an accurate representation of your views?

2. Based on my analysis, I have concluded that the participants in my research identified strongly with their organizations and clients. Are these accurate interpretations of your relationships with your organization and clients?

3. Fighting poverty seemed to be an overriding factor in making participants identify strongly with their organizations and clients. Would you say this is true in your case?

4. There seemed to be a desire to serve a higher purpose among participants in this research. Is that an accurate interpretation of the meaning you derive from your job?

5. Are there any changes in your views or additional information that you will like me to know about with regards to my research?

Thank you very much for your time.
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANTS’ PROFILES

Karla is the first person I interviewed for this study. She works for an organization called Pulling Together. Pulling Together is an umbrella organization that provides professional support to community action agencies within the region. Karla is the manager of the training and development division of the program. Her role includes offering leadership and other managerial training programs as well as ensuring the sustainability of her program. In addition to training therefore she writes and manages the grants for her division.

As a manager Karla said she does not experience job insecurity but the same could not be said of some of her employees. She was very pointed on how difficult it has been to procure funding and the anxiety that her employees experienced from not knowing if they will be able to keep their jobs. She described one incident in which her program suffered funding loss as follows: “we lost 2/3 of our funding and there were nights where I was very nervous about what it was going to mean. I had another project that I work on so I knew my job was safe, but what about my assistant? And she knew too that this may be it.” This statement underscores how uncertain the jobs of grant-funded employees are in nonprofits and this ultimately affect the way they relate to people in their organization.
George also works for Pulling Together. He is a supervisor of a division that provides mentoring program for children as well as services to elderly. As the supervisor he administers the grants and supervises the volunteers and workers in his division. George was satisfied with the funding for his programs and he attributed this phenomenon to the size of the organization. However, like the other supervisors interviewed in for this study he said he was also always looking for an opportunity to raise more funds to support his program.

Angela is in her mid 20’s and works for an after school program called Breaking the Cycle. Breaking the Cycle is affiliated with a university and some of the employees such as Angela have their offices located in the Human Services Department of the university. Breaking the Cycle, works with low income children in schools to help them academically and socially. As one of the program associates, Angela is posted to a school and is required to organize educational and social activities for the children after their regular school hours.

When I asked Angela why she chose to work with children she responded “you get to see a lot of positive effects in the lives of the children. You can see positive improvement in their lives.” Angela argued that working with children is very rewarding and that was the reason she chose to work with Breaking the Cycle.

Angela said before joining Breaking the Cycle she worked for another nonprofit organization that work with children for about four years. She lost her job due to funding cuts. She was therefore quite familiar with what it means to be grant-funded employees in a nonprofit organization. She summed her experiences with grants in the following way
“you feel permanent but you know it is a temporary a thing.” This statement captures the liminal position that Angela found herself in. Although she was a fulltime employee, she still considers herself a temporary worker because there was always the possibility of losing the grant that funds her position and project.

**Stephen** works with a youth development organization as a program director. As program director of one of the youth programs, Stephen administers the grants and supervises five employees and 30 Youthbuild and Americorps volunteers. “I have been with Step Up for it would be 10 years in a couple of months,” said Stephen. Step Up has been in existence for 10 years which means Stephen has been with the organization since it was founded.

Stephen’s description of his initial reaction to working with a nonprofit organization tells us a lot about his experience with the organization and how he has learned to adjust: “I did not have a lot of expectations. I never really worked with and really was not very familiar with at all with how nonprofits work. I was introduced to nonprofits when I came to Step Up. And the notion of grant funding I didn’t really know what that meant. I did not understand the cycles and the ebb and flow.” The “ebb and flow” metaphor used by Stephen shows how unpredictable the grants for Stephen’s program are and how that places him in liminal positions.

**Victor** is an executive director of a mentoring program. His organization matches children with adults for mentoring. As an executive director he was in charge of the day
to day running of the organization. He writes grants and ensures that grants’ and organizations’ rules are implemented. At the time of my interview with him he had lost all his staff to lay-offs due to funding cuts. He had therefore taken on the roles of coordinator and office assistant in addition to his duties as an executive director. His situation showed why many of the participants in this study described the dependence on grants as “scary.” At the time of our interview he was seriously looking for possible grants to apply for to sustain his program.

Jesse works for an environmental organization called Earth Care as coordinator of a watershed program. He described his job as a means to “improve the environment for the benefit of the community.” As the coordinator his role is to oversee cleaning up of watersheds in his region. He expressed pride in what he has accomplished within his program and community.

During my interview with Jesse I noticed that he was focused on his program and not Earth Care as a while so I asked him about his program’s relationship with the whole organization “it probably has not been great as we will like it to be” he responded “…unfortunately over the years it’s been a separation but not because we try to be separated. It is because of the type of work we do.” Jesse said his organization runs multiple programs and that makes it difficult to promote unity among programs. He was therefore caught between focusing on his program and the overall organization.
Kate works in a community development organization, Jancot Network. The organization has been helping businesses develop and thrive for many decades. As program director, Kate is in charge of fundraising and ensuring that the organization runs smoothly. She considers herself “a community organizer for social change.” Kate’s interview indicated how hard nonprofit organizations have to work to sustain themselves. As part of her job she does a lot of collaborative work with other nonprofit organizations. In a year she said they write about “70 grants” in collaboration with other organizations to sustain her position and programs.

Francis is an executive director of a community action agency located in a rural community. As soon as I walked through the door he started telling me about how he had been hired with a grant for a summer camp with an understanding that his employment will end in a few months. 19 years later he is still with the organization and he is now the executive director. He was explicit about the uncertainty of grant funding as well as the possibilities. He expressed concern about how the differences in grants were affecting relationships among his employees. He said he was finding it difficult to let his employees understand that they are working for the same organization instead of their individual programs.

Janet is an executive director of a community action agency. She said she started as a bookkeeper and worked her way into her current position. As the executive director of her organization Janet said her role is to “ensure that all the grants and funding are
operated in compliance and making sure that staff are following all the rules and regulations with all the fair labor standards.” She went into details about the multiple grants she manages and the complexities associated with them. For instance, her Headstart grant cycle was inconsistent with the school cycle, thus making it difficult to ensure an even spread of funds in the academic year.

Janet also talked about the issue of grants and how it affects her employees. She had just laid-off some people a few weeks before I interviewed her due to funding cuts. She used herself as an example to illustrate the liminal positions that grant-funded employees are placed in “I was told 23 years ago, ‘this is a year to year grant, I can’t guarantee you anything’.” She said she does not therefore guarantee the job of anybody she hires because grant funding is unreliable.

Chelsea works for a youth development agency. She joined the organization after completing college and she was now the director of their youth homeless program. As a director she implements the grants and writes reports to the grantors. Like Francis’ organization, her organization was also having internal problems with employees due to the differences in the sources of funding for their programs. Her program was on a five year cycle, which gives her and her employees a lot of financial stability compared to the other programs in the organization, which were working on a year to two year cycles.

The uncertainty experienced by employees in the other programs she said often lead to jealousy and tensions in the organization. She was, however, glad to be running a program that provides services that was badly needed in the region.
Irene works for a community agency. At the time I interviewed her, she had been working with the agency for two months and the grant that supports her position was about to end. She was very frank about her situation “actually right now” she told me “my grant is set to end June 30th and as far as I know it is ending June 30th. It was supposed to end January 30th but we did the extension to June. I am just thinking of the next step.” Irene was in a liminal position at the time I interviewed because she was employed, but could see the end of her employment in a few months. She was therefore trying to figure out what to do next because the grant had already been extended once. The extension of grants is not unique to Irene. Many of the participants in this study described how hard they sometimes tried to extend the life spans of their grants to stay employed.

Martha is a woman in her early 30s. After trying several times to arrange an interview with her I finally got the chance to interview her in her small windowless office which she shares with two other staff members. The organization that Martha works for is called Breaking the Cycle, a program affiliated with a university. Breaking the Cycle helps young people from low income families by working with them to eliminate the stumbling blocks to their academic success. They accomplish this goal mainly by providing an after school programming for children.

Martha described Breaking the Cycle as follows “we are an afterschool program, what we do is we serve children that are at risk academically and financially, so 99% of
my children qualify for free or reduced lunch rates.” Breaking the Cycle is therefore
dedicated to working with young people living at or below poverty rates to overcome
their challenges to be successful academically. Martha’s description of the services they
provide show that Breaking the Cycle is very important in the lives of many of the
children they serve due to the endemic poverty that some of them were subjected to.

Mavis is a woman in her 20’s. I drove about 45 minutes to her organization to recruit
participants for this study. When I got there the place was very quiet apparently their
organization was having a retreat somewhere else and Mavis was the only one who had
come back to the office to lock it up. Fortunately, someone had told her about my study
and she was eager to talk to me about her experiences. We scheduled a time and met at a
popular coffee shop in Coolstone for the interview. Mavis works for environmental
nonprofit organization Earth Care. She had been a Vista volunteer/ worker with the
organization and seemed relieved to have been offered a full-time position.

Joana was a young woman who had just graduated from college. She said she graduated
a year early so she wanted to stay closer to her college while serving the community. She
therefore decided to become a Vista volunteer and was posted to a community action
agency. Vista volunteers are a group of young people who are trained and posted to
different locations by the Corporation for Community Service. Their main mandate is to
serve for a year or two after which they receive an education award. Joana said she was
interested in going to Law School; Vista was therefore an opportunity to do some good
and prepare her for her future career.

Joana was partly attracted to the organization she was working for because of her
immediate supervisor and her desire to be given the freedom to develop her skills to help
the organization. As vista volunteer she receives $200 a month stipend and her role was
to work with the organization’s transportation department. “I did small office things for
her (supervisor),” she explained “because of the gap I did cool things, I wrote ticketing
policies and communicated with other transportation organizations. I have had some
experience that I will not otherwise have.

Mary works with a community action agency that has been known for several decades as
the provider of health and other services to the community. The organization set up a
health clinic for the community a few years ago and really prides itself in this service and
the numerous other services that they provide to support the community. I interviewed
Mary in her office. The office was a little congested but well organized. After I explained
the Consent Form to her she signed it and made a copy for her files before we started the
interview.

“It will be six years next April” Mary said about how long she had worked with
the community action agency “prior to working here I lived in another county where I
worked with a community action agency. I also worked with Jobs and Families Services.
So I have always been in this area, where I work to help the public. That is just what I
want to be able to do.” Mary said she has always been in the business of helping
communities and when she saw a job opening with her current employer she applied for the position and got it.

**John** is a supervisor in a community action agency; Pulling Together. He had been working in the organization for 14 months in his current job. In addition to doing this fulltime job John was also pursuing a Ph.D. in geography. “I have been working for this organization for 14 months” John told me “before starting to work here I was actually on the board of directors for this organization. My father used to work here so I kind of grew up in this organization.” John’s work with Pulling Together seems to have started longtime before he took his current job. As far as John was concerned “being a member of this organization is family. Part of it is that, obviously because I grew up here. But it is also an atmosphere that I try to foster in my division and that I perceive exist not only in this organization but in the board structure.” The ease with which John talked about Pulling Together definitely showed how much time he knew about the organization having practically his whole life affiliated with it.
Title of Research Proposal: Liminal selves: The negotiation of organizational identification by grant-funded employees in nonprofits.

Investigator(s) Information

Primary Investigator

Name: Ephraim Kotey
Department: Communication
Address: 9065 Echo Ln. Athens, OH 45701
Email: EK350392@OHIO.EDU
Phone: 593-0909
Training Module Completed? Yes

Co-investigators

Name:
Department: Communication
Address:
Email: Phone:
Training Module Completed? Yes

IRB Number: Committee: B S
Advisor Information (if applicable)

Name  Dr. Laura Black  Department Communication Studies

Address  Lasher Hall 111
(If off-campus, include city, state and zip code)

Email  Blackl1@ohio.edu

Training Module Completed?  ☑ Yes  ☐ No

Anticipated Starting Date  November, 2009  Duration  3 months
(Work, including recruitment, cannot begin prior to IRB approval. This date should never precede the submission date)

Funding Status

Is the researcher receiving or applying for external funding?  ☐ Yes  ☑ No

If yes, list source

Is there a payment of any kind connected with enrollment of participants on this study that will be paid to persons other than the research participants?  ☐ Yes  ☑ No

(If yes, describe.)

Review Level
Based on the definition in the guidelines, do you believe your research qualifies for:

  ☐ Exempt Review  ☑ Expedited Review  ☐ Full Committee Review

  Category

212
Recruitment/Selection of Subjects

Maximum Number of Human Participants _______ 30 ________

Characteristics of subjects (check as many boxes as appropriate).
___Minors  ___Physically or Mentally Disabled  ___Elementary School Students
___x_Adults  ___Legal Incompetency  ___Secondary School Students
___Prisoners  ___Pregnant Females  ___University Students
___Others (Specify)______________________

Briefly describe the criteria for selection of subjects (inclusion/exclusion).
Include such information as age range, health status, etc. Attach additional pages if necessary.

The research is focused on workers in nonprofits who are working on grant-funded projects. The participants will be adults who are working in social service organizations scattered around the Appalachia region of Ohio. These participants will be above the age of 18 and will not be selected based on their health record or any other criteria apart from the fact that they have experience as grant-funded employees.

How will you identify and recruit prospective participants? If subjects are chosen from records, indicate who gave approval for the use of the records. If records are "private" medical or student records, provide the protocol, consent forms, letters, etc., for securing consent of the subjects for the records. Written documentation for cooperation/permission from the holder or custodian of the records should be attached. (Initial contact of subjects identified through a records search must be made by the official holder of the record, i.e. primary physician, therapist, public school official.)

To recruit the research participants, a snowball method of selection will be used. This method entails relying on research participants to point the researcher in the direction of potential research participants. I will be starting with a few grant-funded employees that I know and then rely on them to introduce me to other participants who are also working on grant-funded projects in nonprofits. In all thirty (30) participants will be recruited for this study.

Please describe your relationship to the potential participants, i.e. instructor of class, co-worker, etc. If no relationship, state no relationship.

I have no relationships with the research participants apart from those I will initially contact to start the snowballing process who I consider as friends.
Attach copies of all recruitment tools (advertisements, posters, etc.) and label as APPENDIX B

Performance Sites

List all collaborating and performance sites, and provide copy of IRB approval from that site and/or letters of cooperation or support.

The recruitments of research participants will be based on snowball technique. It will be mainly done through a referral system. Once someone is referred to me, I will initiate a contact with that potential research participants and arrange to meet with him/her if he/she agrees to participate in the research.

Project Description

Please provide a brief summary of this project, using non-technical terms that would be understood by a non-scientific reader. Please limit this description to no more than one typewritten page.

This research examines the organizational identification of grant-funded employees in nonprofits. Organizational identification refers to the extent to which members of an organization defines him/herself as an embodiment of the values, goals and aspiration of the organization with which they are associated. There are different forms of organizational identification that can be assumed by members of organizations. And these forms of identifications are based on several factors including the extent of the promotion of organizational identification by the organization, the status of the individual within the organization and willingness of members to identify with the organization.

The nonprofit sector relies extensively on grants from government and foundations to support their services. These grants are awarded to support specific projects designed to achieve the goals of the funding agency as well as the recipient organization. In many instances workers are hired with these grants to accomplish the goals set by the grantors and the grantees. Grant-funded employees are thus required to play an active role in ensuring that the goals of both the grantors and the grantees are accomplished. Another factor in this equation, are the recipients of these services. Grant-funded employees therefore work with multiple stakeholders and are therefore subjected to multiple identification targets. Also, the natures of grants, such as their cyclical nature, means that the continual employment of grant-funded employees cannot always be guaranteed. Their positions in nonprofits could be described as liminal in nature.
This research therefore explores how grant-funded employees negotiate their identities in the midst of multiple identification targets and their liminal positions in nonprofits.

Please describe the specific scientific objectives (aims) of this research and any previous relevant research.

Research in organizational identification has featured prominently in organizational communication research since Cheney (1982) sought to examine the communicative mechanisms used by organizations to limit the differences between them and their members. Since then, organizational communication scholars have used the theory to examine workers and organizations in many situations. Organizational identification has been used to examine, multiplicity of identity targets, techniques used by organizations to foster identification and the organizational identification of temporal workers.

This study seeks to expand the exploration of the theory of organizational identification by examining how workers in liminal positions negotiate their identities in organizations with multiple identification targets.

Methodology: please describe the procedures (sequentially) that will be performed/followed with human participants.

This study uses qualitative research methods. I chose this method because it gives me the opportunity to interact with research participants as I seek to understand how they negotiate their identities given their liminal positions as grant-funded employees in nonprofits. The first part of the process will consist of recruiting the research participants. Once the participants have been recruited a time, date and place will be set for interviews. In addition to individual interviews, two focused groups will be organized. Each focused group will consist of seven (7) participants. In all sixteen (16) participants will be interviewed and fourteen (14) participants will participate in the focus groups, bringing the total to 30 participants. These interviews and focus groups will be audio recorded. The next stage of the process will be transcription of the data collected from the participants. The transcribed data will then be coded and analyzed based on the research questions, which seek to explore the relationship between grant-funded employees and their nonprofits, the grant-funding agencies, their clients and other stakeholders. In addition to the data from interviews and focus groups, ethnographic notes will also be taken about the participants and their organizations. These notes will be geared towards helping the researcher to contextualize the data from the participants with goals to making sense of who they say they are in light of their positions and roles.
Describe any potential risks or discomforts of participation and the steps that will be taken to minimize them.

The study is designed to examine the perspectives of research participants about whom they believe they are in relation to their organizations and their stakeholders. There is therefore limited risk as associated with participating in this study. The most likely discomfort that participants may experience is probably, talking about how natures of grants affect their relationships with their organizations. This may especially be in cases whereby participants may not be wholly happy with their organizations because of the way they are being treated. To minimize this potential discomfort, participants will be reassured that the data collected from them will not be shared with management of the nonprofit or any of their stakeholders.

This will be done through the confidential agreements that will be signed at the beginning of the data collection section. I will use that opportunity to tell the participants about their rights and how the data will be handled to prevent the sharing of anything they tell me with a third party who is not associated with this study.

Describe the anticipated benefits to the individual participants. If none, state that. (Note that compensation is not a benefit, but should be listed in the compensation section on the next page.)

The research participants will not receive any monetary compensation for their participations in this study. The study will however offer these participants the opportunity to share their experiences with others.

Describe the anticipated benefits to society and/or the scientific community. There must be some benefit to justify the use of human subjects.

The reward that will likely emerge from this study is the highlighting of what it means to work as a grant-funded employee in nonprofits. The experiences of grant-funded employees have largely been ignored by many disciplines. This is study therefore an attempt to change this situation by requesting grant-funded employees to share their experiences. As this study makes its way into publication, it may draw attention to certain issues being faced by grant-funded employees and an understanding of their positions in nonprofits.

Furthermore, as argued by Lewis (2006) communication scholars have paid little attention to the nonprofit sector. The nonprofit sector makes up a huge segment of the US and the world economy as large. According to the sector is the sixth largest in the world employs millions of people and providing essential services to many more across the globe. An understanding of the workforce of this sector is therefore very important. This study aims at
contributing to the extant literature on nonprofits. It brings communication lenses to examine the sector.

Please discuss the level of confidentiality, if any, honored for the data collected. For example, indicate whether records will be labeled with the subject’s name, or whether they will be labeled with a code number, with a master key that links name and code number maintained in a separate and secure location.

The research participants and the data they provide will be kept confidential in this study. The research participants will not be identified by their real names. Instead they will be given names that will make it difficult for anyone to trace a statement or data back to them. Organizations featured in the study will also be given codes and names that will make them anonymous.

The digital recorder and the transcripts from the study will be kept in a secured room behind a double locked place.

With whom will identifiable data be shared outside the immediate research team? For each, explain confidentiality measures.

The identifiable data will be shared with only my dissertation advisor.

Will participants be: Audiotaped? □ Yes □ No

Videotaped? □ Yes □ x No

If so, describe how/where the tapes will be stored (i.e. locked file cabinet in investigator office), who will have access to them, and an estimate of the date they will be destroyed.

The tapes will be stored in a file cabinet in my office. Both the door of the office and the cabinet will be locked to protect the confidentiality of the research participants.

Provide details of any compensation (money, course credit, gifts) being offered to participants, including how the compensation will be prorated for participants who discontinue participation prior to completion.

N/A
Instruments
List all questionnaires, instruments, standardized tests below, with a brief description, and provide copies of each, labeled as APPENDIX C.

The study will use an interview and focus group protocols to seek data from the participants. The protocols will record brief background information about the participants and their organizations, they provide the participants with the nature of the studies and lists the questions that the participants will be asked. See appendix C.

How will the data be analyzed? If applicable, state the hypothesis and describe how the analysis of the data will test that hypothesis.

The data analysis will start during the course of the research and continued throughout the course of the study. The main analysis of the data will however start after the transcription of the data. Once the data is transcribed it will be coded. The code will be based on the questions that the study seeks to answer; that are how grant-funded employees negotiate their identification with their nonprofits, funding agencies, clients or any other stakeholders with links to the organization. It will seek to identify the use of the transcendent “we” as the participants describe the activities related to the various stakeholders, their description of their responses to things that affect the various stakeholders and the description of how the various stakeholders has influence who they are as nonprofit workers. Once the data has been coded, elements of the views of the participants will be used to write up the results and the discussions sections. The results and discussions sections of the study will focus on who these grant-funded employees think they are, how their positions in their organizations influences who they are and their perspectives on what it means to work on grant-funded projects in the nonprofit sector.
Informed Consent Process

Are you requesting a waiver or alteration of Informed Consent? ☐ Yes ☑ No
(If yes, check one, and answer a - e)

☐ Waiver of signature
☐ Deception (incomplete disclosure)
☐ Complete Waiver of consent

a. Provide justification for the waiver.

b. Describe how the proposed research presents no more than minimal risk to participants.

c. Why will a waiver of informed consent not adversely affect the rights and welfare of participants?

d. Why is it impracticable to carry out the research without a waiver or alteration of informed consent?

e. How will pertinent information be provided to participants, if appropriate, at a later date?

Even if waiver of written informed consent is granted, you will likely be required to obtain verbal permission that reflects the elements of informed consent (if appropriate). Please specify below information to be read/given to participants.
Attach copies of all consent documents or text and label as APPENDIX A. Please use the template provided at the end of this document.

Informed consent is a process, not just a form. Potential participants/representatives must be given the information they need to make an informed decision to participate in this research. How will you provide information/obtain permission?

Participants will be informed on the rational for the study. Opportunities will also be given for them to ask questions during a meeting with them. They will then be asked to give their consent for the study.

How and where will the consent process occur? How will it be structured to enhance independent and thoughtful decision-making? What steps will be taken to avoid coercion or undue influence?

The consent process will take place in the organization during a regular meeting of the two departments. Participants will be told that they have the right to agree not to be observed during the course of the study. There will be no coercion for participation.

Will the investigator(s) be obtaining all of the informed consents? □ X Yes □ No

If not, identify by name and training who will be describing the research to subjects/representatives and inviting their participation?

Will all adult participants have the capacity to give informed consent? If not, explain procedures to be followed.

Yes

If any participants will be minors, include procedures/form for parental consent and for the assent from the minor.
N/A
Will participants be deceived or incompletely informed regarding any aspect of the study? □ Yes □ X No

If yes, provide rationale for use of deception.

If yes, attach copies of post-study debriefing information and label as APPENDIX D. Additionally, complete the questions related to a consent form waiver or alteration on page 9.
Investigator Assurance

I certify that the information provided in this outline form is complete and correct.

I understand that as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, conduct of the study and the ethical performance of the project.

I agree to comply with Ohio University policies on research and investigation involving human subjects (O.U. Policy # 19.052), as well as with all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects in research, including, but not limited to the following:

- The project will be performed by qualified personnel, according to the OU approved protocol.
- No changes will be made in the protocol or consent form until approved by the OU IRB.
- Legally effective informed consent will be obtained from human subjects if applicable, and documentation of informed consent will be retained, in a secure environment, for three years after termination of the project.
- Adverse events will be reported to the OU IRB promptly, and no later than within 5 working days of the occurrence.
- All protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. Research must stop at the end of that approval period unless the protocol is re-approved for another term.

I further certify that the proposed research is not currently underway and will not begin until approval has been obtained. A signed approval form, on Office of Research Compliance letterhead, communicates IRB approval.

Principal Investigator Signature ___________________________ Date 10/20/2009

(please print name) Ephraim Kotey ___________________________

Co-Investigator Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

(please print name) ___________________________
Faculty Advisor/Sponsor Assurance

By my signature as sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student(s) or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol. In addition:

- I agree to meet with the investigator(s) on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
- Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
- I assure that the investigator will report significant or untoward adverse events to the IRB in writing promptly, and within 5 working days of the occurrence.
- If I will be unavailable, as when on sabbatical or vacation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence.

I further certify that the proposed research is not currently underway and will not begin until approval has been obtained. A signed approval form, on Office of Research Compliance letterhead, communicates IRB approval.

Advisor/Faculty Sponsor Signature_________________________ Date ______

(please print name) Dr Laura Black_________________________

*The faculty advisor/sponsor must be a member of the OU faculty. The faculty member is considered the responsible party for legal and ethical performance of the project.
Checklist:

☐ Completed and Signed IRB-1 (this form)
☐ Appendix A - copies of all consent documents (in 12 pt. Font) including
   ___ Informed Consent to Participate in Research (adult subjects)
   ___ Parental Permission/Informed Consent (parents of subjects who are minors or children)
   ___ Assent to Participate in Research (used when subjects are minors or children)
☐ Appendix B - copies of any recruitment tools (advertisements, posters, etc.)
☐ Appendix C – copies of all instruments (surveys, standardized tests, questionnaires, interview topics, etc.).
☐ Appendix D - Copies of debriefing text
☐ Appendix E - Approval from other IRB, School District, Corporation, etc.
☐ Appendix F - Any additional materials that will assist the Board in completing its review
☐ Appendix G - Copies of any IRB approvals
☐ Appendix H - Copies of Human Subjects Research Training Certificates (for all key personnel involved in non-exempt research)

All fields on the form must be completed, regardless of review level. If a field is not applicable, indicate by inserting n/a. Incomplete forms will result in delayed processing.
Forward this completed form and all attachments to:

Human Subjects Research
Office of Research Compliance
RTEC 117

Questions? Visit the website at www.ohio.edu/research/compliance/ or email compliance@ohio.edu
The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(Ib).

**Project Title:** Liminal Selves: The Negotiation of Organizational Identification by Grant-Funded Employees in Nonprofits

**Primary Investigator:** Ephraim Kotey

**Co-Investigator(s):**

**Faculty Advisor:** Laura Black

**Department:** Communication Studies

Rebecca Cale, AAB, CIP
Office of Research Compliance

 Approval Date   Expiration Date
11/02/09    11/01/10

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
Title of Research: Liminal selves: the negotiation of organizational identification by grant-funded employees in nonprofits.

Researchers: Ephraim Nikoi Kotey

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

This study is investigates the organizational identification of grant-funded employees in nonprofits. It seeks to examine who grant-funded employees believe they are and how their identities are influenced by their relationship with the stakeholders of nonprofits.

Risks and Discomforts

This study involves interviews and focus groups designed to solicit your views on your relationships with stakeholders including your nonprofits. The questions may encourage you to think about your relationships with your organization and this may cause a little discomfort. However, I will like to assure you that the information you provide will not be shared with either your employer or any of the stakeholders in your organization.

Benefits

N/A

Confidentiality and Records

The interview and focus group data from the study will be kept in a double locked place. Only the main researcher and the advisor will have access to the raw data.
Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:
* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU;

**Compensation**

*\( N/A \)*

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr. Laura Black at (740) 593 4690 or blackl1@ohio.edu.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740)593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions
- known risks to you have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no policy or plan to pay for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this research protocol
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is given voluntarily
- you may change your mind and stop participation at any time without penalty or loss of any benefits to which you may otherwise be entitled.

Signature____________________________________ Date__________

__________________________________________

Printed Name_____________________________________

__________________________

Version Date: 10/20/2009