EXPLORING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT FOLLOWING RADICAL CHANGE:

A CASE STUDY WITHIN THE PARKS CANADA AGENCY

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION FOR ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF A THESIS

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Understanding how committed employees are within an organization is a valuable tool for managing and fostering a successful work environment. A continued appreciation of employee commitment is especially beneficial following organizational change as it has been shown that change inevitably impacts commitment levels to some degree. This study investigated organizational commitment within a subpopulation of the newly restructured Parks Canada Agency using an established survey instrument. The findings revealed that an employee's tenure and work location currently influences commitment levels among the sample that was surveyed. This study also found that commitment to the Parks Canada mandate significantly differs from the expressed commitment to the current state of the organization. An effort to improve the moderate levels of organizational commitment would be a valuable strategy for enhancing the employer-employee relationship and contributing to the positive effects of the organizational change.

Executive Summary

The commitment that employees express within the Parks Canada Agency toward the mandate of the organization is undeniable. Such strong personal and professional commitment to the written values of an organization is relatively uncommon and this shared intrinsic dedication should be actively celebrated, acknowledged and encouraged. Although a formidable commitment to the Parks Canada mandate exists among all employees that were surveyed in this study[1], commitment to the organization declines significantly for those employees who have worked within Parks Canada for longer than eight years. These lower commitment levels are exacerbated among the employees who work at the Ottawa locations of the Ontario Service Centre. Employees shared several explanations for the lower organizational commitment levels and almost all of the comments were directly related to current perceptions of management.

In recent years, employee commitment has been shown to be a powerful driving force in the success of a given organization. Operationally, high levels of employee commitment reduce absenteeism and turnover (Worrall, Cooper & Campbell-Jamison, 2000). Functionally, an environment that fosters commitment enables employees the opportunity to be more involved and satisfied with the work they are producing (Bennett & Durkin, 2000). Measuring current levels of organizational commitment[2] is a valuable tool for understanding if challenges exist that are impeding the benefits associated with

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[1] This research study was conducted at the locations within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit and the Ontario Service Centre of the Parks Canada Agency.

[2] Commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. There are 3 components of commitment: 1) a belief in and acceptance of the values of the organization; 2) a strong willingness to put in effort for the organization; and 3) the desire to remain with the organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

high commitment levels. The information and awareness gained from such activities can lead to solutions that resolve employee concerns and advance positive employee-employer relationships.

There are various factors that can influence levels of organizational commitment to shift. The conditions that specifically relate to the measurement of employee commitment frequently include demographic and employment characteristics (i.e. age or tenure). These characteristics are often able to depict variations in commitment among employee segments in organizations. Moreover, various situations or events occurring within organizations are shown to influence commitment levels among employees. One particular situation that has received a fair amount of attention is when an employee's work environment undergoes significant changes (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Bennett and Durkin (2000) found that organizational change significantly influences employee commitment to the organization, especially when the perceived values of the organization have changed.

The Parks Canada Agency is an organization that has undergone tremendous change throughout the past several years. In the early 1990s, the Parks Canada administrators planned a radical structural transformation to free the Parks program from the constraints imposed by being housed within a government department (Anthony, 1998). The changes that ensued enabled the creation of the Parks Canada Agency in 1998. It is an Agency accountable to government yet it is managed independently in order to function more effectively amid reduced government appropriations (Canadian Heritage, 1998). The employees have experienced the drastic effects of this structural change through downsizing, union consolidation, internal restructuring and a new

employer relationship. When the Agency formed, the approximately 5000 people working for Parks Canada were transferred from being civil servants of the Treasury Board of Canada to employees of the Parks Canada Agency (Government of Canada, 1998b; Government of Canada, 1998d). All of these changes took place throughout the past several years. Now that the Agency is arguably settling into its new management structure, gaining an understanding of current organizational commitment levels among the employees can be a valuable tool for fostering positive relationships and resolving any negative impacts of the change among all members within the Agency.

There were two purposes of the research study that was conducted within a relatively small segment of the Parks Canada Agency. The first was to gain insight into the current state of organizational commitment among Parks Canada employees. The second was to develop a greater understanding of the issues that are currently affecting organizational commitment among the employees within the sample. The two main employee groups that were asked to participate in this study were the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. The employees who work within these two groups span across nine locations throughout Eastern Ontario and comprised a combined total of 300 people during the time of data collection.

This study used a quantitative framework and employed the *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ) designed by Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982). Throughout the past two decades the 15-question scaled survey was extensively applied to effectively measure commitment levels among employees from various employment situations. In addition to the OCQ, two scaled questions were added to determine variations in commitment between the mandate and the management of the organization.

A participant information sheet consisted of questions relating to basic demographic information (excluding questions that would reveal one's identity) and employment related characteristics. The survey instrument concluded with an invitation for participants to comment. The surveys were distributed in-person by presenting the purpose and rationale of the study to every research location and all employees were asked to participate of their own volition. Each survey was accompanied with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and participating employees were asked to return the survey within 3-weeks.

The results of this study were based upon a 62.6% response rate. The total number of responses received in relation to the overall sample has enabled a high degree of confidence to be placed in the results. The findings demonstrated that significant variations among a range of demographic and employment characteristics to organizational commitment exist within the research sample. To begin, the length in which an employee has worked for Parks Canada was shown to have a significant influence on their commitment to the organization. Those employees who have worked the least amount of time within Parks Canada reported the highest commitment levels, whereas the people who worked eight years or more within the organization reported drastically less commitment levels. The other significant relationship that was found related to where employees work. The results showed that the employees who work within the Ottawa locations of the Ontario Service Centre have much lower organizational commitment levels compared to their colleagues within the Cornwall office of the Service Centre and those who work within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. Both of these relationships could be directly explained by the organizational change that

has taken place. The significant variation that arises within the length of employment variable takes place for those employees who have endured the changes that have occurred within the organization. The comments that employees shared from the Ottawa offices of the Ontario Service Centre generally explained their reported commitment levels by making reference to their transition from the National Office to the Ontario Service Centre at the time when the Agency was formed.

The current state of commitment among the sample that was surveyed was moderate. As indicated by the results of the survey, the employees remain strongly committed to the mandate of the organization but do not show a strong sense of commitment to various aspects of the organization. The majority of issues that were explained as having a negative effect on commitment levels pertained to various perceptions of management. Although a direct relationship between the organizational change and organizational commitment was not measured, it was inferred from the results that the changes that have taken place within Parks Canada have greatly impacted commitment levels among the employees.

The results of this study clearly demonstrate that several aspects of employee commitment to the Parks Canada Agency can be improved at this moment in time. Managers within the Agency can use the information contained within this report to guide decisions aimed at improving their relationship with the employees. Efforts can be made to address the concerns raised by the employee groups that have indicated lower levels of commitment. Paradoxically, these groups were the ones that expressed the least desire to remain in the organization but reported the highest levels of commitment to the mandate. The concerns that have been identified are considered specific to the locations

that were surveyed, yet it would be highly beneficial for the Parks Canada Agency to examine commitment levels nation-wide in order to identify, acknowledge and effectively respond to commitment caveats.   Such an endeavour would enhance, and contribute to, the positive effects of the organizational change.

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In closing, this thesis is dedicated to all of the passionate people who participated in this study and to those who have chosen to commit their time, expertise and effort toward the conservation of our heritage. I hope that the information obtained from their participation in this research will make a difference by enabling an open-dialogue that focuses on the well-being of human resources within the Parks Canada Agency.

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Prologue

At the onset of this final report, I feel that it is very important to explain some of the significant and unpredictable caveats that occurred along this journey as they have inevitably shaped how I interpreted the results of this study. I toyed with the notion of not disclosing various experiences that have transpired throughout this study's development for fear that I might inappropriately persuade readers to adopt a perspective which is not their own. Perhaps I should let the results of this study speak for themselves. However, the situations and interactions that occurred as a result of this thesis topic have inexorably guided and influenced how I interpreted data that was collected. The way I initially regarded the structure and organization of the recently formed Parks Canada Agency has changed significantly each step of the way to completing my Master's research paper. This revolution has occurred as a result of my intense involvement and struggle with the actualization of this study and my personal motives for upholding the ethical principles that Parks Canada advocates within many of its own documents. I will use this opportunity to share how this research study came to be and I will conclude by stating my intentions while evaluating and interpreting the valuable information that so many employees shared with candour and hope.

Having spent my undergraduate career studying beneath the broad umbrella of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, I learned much about how public, private and not-for-profit entities within the recreation field are managed and what components tend to be involved within each sector in order to achieve success. This broad learning experience I continued to apply both academically and professionally to a field that is in my mind, best described as a question: "How can we better manage our

special people, places and things in order to better conserve and protect our heritage?" I have applied this question to the courses I have taken (typically a combination of management and environmental studies courses) and in the jobs I have pursued (working with organizations such as Ontario Parks and Parks Canada). Choosing to complete a Master's degree was a decision that I made with the intent of conducting research on an aspect of management within the Parks Canada Agency.

Upon entering the Master's program at the University of Waterloo, I began to think more about what kind of thesis I wanted to devote my time and mind to once I completed my coursework. In the fall of 2000 I visited the Ontario Service Centre in Cornwall for the Parks Canada Agency and I began talking with people about what areas of social science research would be meaningful and important. It quickly became clear that many people had strong feelings about the organizational change that was taking place within Parks Canada. I followed up this topic by conducting a pre-test using qualitative interviews with several Parks Canada employees. The interviews centred on organizational change and how committed employees are to the current direction and management of the Parks Canada Agency. The weight of interest, discussion and variance in opinion that became evident throughout all of my interactions with Parks Canada employees produced clear evidence that an internal research study focussed on current employee organizational commitment would be extremely beneficial. At this point a committee of Parks Canada employees, from within the Ontario Service Centre in Cornwall, was established to help guide the research process and provide feedback on the thesis development.

Once my coursework was completed in April of 2001 I devoted all my time to conducting research on the history of Parks Canada and its transition into an Agency. One of the fundamental philosophical changes that I observed while reading about the new Agency structure and management style was a deliberate move to placing more emphasis on being more accountable both politically and financially. Much of the new focus was undeniably geared toward streamlining the organization to reduce costs while improving revenue production in other untapped areas. This very logical and responsible action is often seen as a technique adopted by many public organizations from the private sector. Most of the conversations I had with people working within Parks Canada often touched on how this new "revenue-oriented" philosophical change has impacted their work situations. This common reoccurring theme presented itself so clearly that I decided to link it with the two other themes that I had decided to investigate: organizational change and organizational commitment.

In June of 2001 I completed writing a research proposal that described an exploratory study directed toward understanding (a) how committed employees are to the current model of the Parks Canada Agency (b) what they think about the current management approach (c) how the organizational change has affected their jobs, and (d) how they perceive the term 'business' when associated with conservation organizations. The fourth objective was included to better understand how employees interpret the inclusion of the term 'business' within a conservation oriented public entity because it was evident among several people who were interviewed that disagreement exists in terms of its use and meaning. The population and sample included in this study consisted of all employees who work at the National Office, the Ontario Service Centre, and all

National Historic Site, National Historic Canal and National Park employees within Ontario. Survey distribution would take place during the fall of 2001.

Once the proposal was written I had it reviewed and approved by my academic committee, which consists of three University of Waterloo professors, and the University of Waterloo Ethics Committee. It was also reviewed by the Human Resources Department in the Parks Canada Agency National Office, the Department of Business Planning in the National Office, several people in the Ontario Service Centre and other employees who work within the field. This collaborative and comprehensive effort was conducted to ensure that the results of my thesis would be taken into consideration because of the awareness and support granted for the proposal. Since there is no written protocol within the Parks Canada Agency for granting approval for internal research studies, I felt this collective effort was important. Therefore, I followed the advice of my Parks Canada Advisory Committee and received support and approval from all of the participating managers. Once this support was established the data collection process began.

Shortly after I started to distribute surveys to employees, I received indirect word that a senior manager had reviewed the survey and had major concerns about the questions that were being asked to employees. The distribution was immediately stopped and a lengthy hiatus followed where extensive negotiations began with a one-sided effort to salvage some of the research questions that were deemed most relevant to the employees. During this time, I was never able to speak directly with the senior manager who voiced concern…I had to communicate through the bureaucratic chain of command.

In the end, an approval to continue with the research study was granted by the Parks Canada Executive Board with several major revisions. The scope of the research study was limited to asking employees only about organizational commitment. No questions could be asked that reveal employee opinions about the current management approach. The study sites were also limited to one of the four Field Units within Ontario and the Ontario Service Centre. The National Office was not to participate.

The political nature of the Parks Canada Agency shone through these actions most strongly when I asked to have the reasons for the changes explained to me in writing from the source that made the decisions. As a courtesy, I requested the reasons in writing because I was openly dissuaded from trying to arrange a meeting with the source to speak in person. In the end, I never received any written or clear indication for why senior managers did not want to know what employees think about how the parks, sites and assets that they conserve and protect are being managed…I'm only able to speculate. I also didn't want to push the issue any further for fear that the approval to continue the research would be rebuked.

With the revised survey and thesis in hand, I visited each location personally to discuss the nature of the study and to distribute the surveys to those employees who chose to participate. The interest demonstrated by employees to share their experiences and commitment to the current organization was undeniable. The high response rate that this study has received reveals the value and significance that this type of research symbolizes within the lives of the people who work within the Agency. They want their voices heard.

Before setting out to analyze and interpret the collected data, I acknowledged and recognized that this journey inevitably changed my perspective and shaped the biases that I currently bestow toward the management of the Parks Canada Agency. I realized that my views and experiences would impact how the data is analyzed and interpreted. Therefore, instead of concealing my background, I am choosing to be open, transparent and accountable to the events that occurred. My goal at the beginning of my Master's thesis was to conduct a useful and meaningful research study that could have a beneficial impact upon the people who participate. It is their unadulterated voices that need to be heard, not a rendition of their voices as interpreted by me. Every effort was made throughout the analysis and interpretation of this study to ensure that the true intent and meaning behind each participant response was revealed. This was accomplished by incorporating peer reviewers from various backgrounds to assess and ensure the validity of the analysis and interpretation that has been conducted throughout the process. I feel extremely confident that this objective has been accomplished. Let the results speak for themselves.

1.0 Introduction

With the passage of the Parks Canada Agency Act in 1998, Parks Canada officially became an Agency of the federal government (Government of Canada, 1998a). Accordingly, it underwent a significant and fundamental change in the way it was organized and operated. The reasons for the operational shift have, by and large, been viewed as necessary and logical, however the transition into the organization that was initially envisioned has arguably been difficult, complex and controversial. To fully explain and understand the complexity of the current circumstances faced by the Parks Canada Agency and its employees, it is important to revisit Parks Canada's past.

1.1 A Brief History of Management within Parks Canada

The branch of government responsible for ensuring the protection and promotion of our Canadian National Parks and National Historic Sites has had an interesting history. Much like other federally run departments, Parks Canada endured the transitory nature of governing bodies when shifted from one department to another. One author describes Parks Canada's past in the following way: "Like an orphan child, it has had to endure the vicissitudes of its foster-home department of the moment" (Anthony, 1998, p.2). The organization known today as the Parks Canada Agency is currently housed in its seventh federal department since its inception in 1911 (see Table 1) (Lothian, 1987; Canadian Heritage, 1996). Table 1 shows the various names that have been used to describe the Parks Canada department. The most important characteristic illustrated within Table 1 is the instability that often accompanies different elected governments with varying agendas. By the early 1990's the Parks Canada department now within the Ministry of

Table 1: History of Parks Canada Administration

Previous Name(s) of Parks Canada	Host Department	Duration
1. <u>Prior to May 19, 1911</u> • Rocky Mountains Park • Forest Parks • National Park Reserve • Dominion Forest Reserves <u>In 1911 all 4 groups amalgamated</u> • Dominion Parks Branch <u>In 1921 Branch renamed</u> • National Parks Branch	Department of Interior	July 1, 1873 – Nov. 30, 1936
2. <u>December 31st 1936 renamed</u> • Land, Parks and Forests Branch	Department of Mines and Resources	Dec. 1, 1936 – Jan. 17, 1950
3. <u>January 18th 1950 renamed</u> • Forestry Branch <u>December 1, 1950 renamed</u> • National Parks Branch	Department of Resources and Development	Jan. 18, 1950 – Dec. 15, 1953
4. <u>Branch Name Maintained</u> • National Parks Branch <u>May 1st 1965 renamed</u> • National and Historic Resources Branch <u>In early 1966 the Branch was renamed</u> • National and Historic Parks Branch	Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources	Dec. 16. 1953 – Sept. 30, 1966
5. <u>Branch Name Maintained</u> • National and Historic Parks Branch <u>April 30, 1973 the Branch was renamed</u> • Parks Canada	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development	Oct. 1, 1966 – June 5, 1979
6. <u>Branch Renamed</u> • Environment Canada – Parks Service	Environment Canada	June 5, 1979 – June 1993
7. <u>Branch Renamed</u> • Parks Canada <u>New Agency Established under the Canadian Heritage Umbrella – December 3, 1998</u> • Parks Canada Agency	Canadian Heritage (pronounced by law – July 12, 1996)	June 1993– Present

Note. Information obtained from Lothian, W. F. (1987). *A brief history of Canada's National Parks*. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada; Canadian Heritage (1996). *Parks Canada's mandate for change*. Ottawa, Ontario: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada; Parks Canada. (1981). Parks Canada's new environment. *Park Scan, 1,* 1, 1-2.; Government of Canada. (1998a). *Parks Canada Agency Act*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Canadian Heritage, began to question other management structure alternatives. The impetus for considering reorganization had a lot to do with the economic and situational changes occurring within government at that time (Searle, 2000). For example, Canada underwent a sizable recession during the early 1990s while undergoing massive parliamentary leadership changes in 1993 (National Library of Canada and National Archives of Canada, 2002). All of the discussions for change were generally guided by a desire to free Parks Canada from the volatility that has conventionally accompanied federal departmental control. Overall, the factors that contributed to the structural change included: (a) increasing federal pressure to reduce expenditures and other downsizing pressures; (b) rethinking the role of government and how it can be structured; and (c) the desire to create a distinct and quasi-independent identity within the Department of Canadian Heritage (Anthony, 1998).

The new organizational structure that materialized, as a result of discussions and debate, was introduced during the federal budget of March 1996 (Public Service Commission of Canada, 1996). It was announced that an agency status would be established for Parks Canada that would "provide better services to Canadians and visitors through simplified human resource and administrative rules and more flexible financial authorities" (Anthony, 1998, pp.2). This structural transformation was a major undertaking. New legislation needed to be written in order to create and provide a parks agency with the authority and tools required to implement and manage a new course of existence.

Two years following the initial agency announcement the Secretary of State (Parks) Andy Mitchell, on behalf of the Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps,

introduced the proposed legislation on February 5, 1998 to establish the new Canadian

Parks Agency (Government of Canada, 1998c). This new legislation outlined the

proposed changes that would occur as a result of agency status. It was created with the

direction and advice of all actively interested parties, as all Canadians and relevant

groups were able to take part in two rounds of public consultations (Government of

Canada, 1998c). By December 21, 1998 the "Parks Canada Agency [became] a reality

with Proclamation and appointment of the first Chief Executive Officer – Mr. Tom Lee"

(National Public Service Alliance of Canada, 1998, 21 December 1998 section, para. 1).

Table 2 outlines some of the fundamental changes that have taken place as a result of

Agency status.

One of the most important characteristics attributed to the new Parks Canada

Agency is that it continued to embrace its long-standing mandate as well as the *Guiding*

Principles and Operational Policies that were developed in 1994. The mandate of Parks

Canada states, "On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally

significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and foster public

understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and

commemorative integrity for present and future generations" (Parks Canada, 2001, para. 1).

The *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* document (Parks Canada, 1994) is

described as:

> a comprehensive statement of broad principles that gives direction to both present
>
> programs and future initiatives of Parks Canada. It provides a framework for the
>
> delivery of heritage programs and for responsible management decisions that
>
> reflect the national interest while being sensitive to local considerations. (p. 7)

Table 2: Parks Canada Framework Before and After Agency Status

	Department of Canadian Heritage	Parks Canada Agency
Parks Canada Mandate and Values	▪ Mandate retained from previous administration ▪ Parks Canada's *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* written in 1994	▪ Commitment to uphold and continue using the tenets ascribed within the mandate and the *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* document
Governing Framework	▪ A department within the Ministry of Canadian Heritage	▪ A distinct legal entity, a Departmental Corporation
Management Framework	▪ Political Bureaucracy. Led by the Minister of Canadian Heritage.	▪ Directed and managed independently by a CEO and Executive Board who incorporates directives from the Minister
Accountability	▪ All of Parks Canada's activities subject to federal government approval and the Minister has full power over current and future directives.	▪ The CEO is accountable to the Minister of Canadian Heritage who retains ultimate power over the direction of Parks Canada.
Financing	• All revenues deposited into the federal government Consolidated Revenue Fund. • Appropriations and other revenue sources deposited within the Canadian Heritage Account	• Full retention and re-investment authority for all revenues. • Establishment of a Parks Canada Account funded through appropriations, property sales and donations
Human Resources	• Treasury Board (TB) is the employer • TB has the authority to set policies • Staffing authority: *Public Service Employment Act* ▪ TB negotiates with Union	• Parks Canada Agency (PCA) is the employer • PCA has the authority to set policies (approved by CEO on February 3, 1999) • Staffing Authority: Agency • PCA negotiates with the Union (under TB mandate)
Administrative Management	▪ Subject to policies and procedures within the Ministry of Canadian Heritage	▪ More flexibility to acquire property by way of gifts or donations and greater ability to specialize day-to-day operations based on specific needs of PCA.

Note: Information obtained from Government of Canada. (1998d). *Summary of the Canadian Parks Agency legislation*. Unpublished (provided to employees); Government of Canada. (1998b). *Parks Canada Agency employee information kit: A road map to transition.* (Available from the Parks Canada Agency, Human Resources, 25 Eddy Street, Hull, QC K1A 0M5); Government of Canada. (1998a). *Parks Canada Agency Act.* Ottawa, ON: Author.

The philosophical ideology of Parks Canada is engraved within these two articles and they are both practical and symbolic of the kind of organization Parks Canada believes itself to be.

In addition to the *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* document, the Human Resource Management Regime of the new Agency identified values and operational principles that specifically address how all employees should relate and interact with one another. Tom Lee, the Chief Executive Officer of the Parks Canada Agency on February 3, 1999, approved these human resource values and operational principles (Parks Canada, 1999). Prior to Parks Canada becoming an Agency, the human resource policies were those established by the Treasury Board. The specific Parks Canada human resource values and operational principles were developed with input from employees across Canada. As such, "they reflect an understanding of [the] enduring mandate and the distinctive circumstances…" in which Parks Canada employees work (Parks Canada, 1999, pp. 6). These values and operating principles are outlined in Appendix A.

1.2   The Parks Canada Agency: Optimism for Change

The promise of a brighter future for Parks Canada was articulated to the employees throughout the process of becoming an Agency. When the Mandate for Change was released in 1996, the Department of Canadian Heritage recognized and praised the "highly dedicated workforce" within Parks Canada and affirmed, "This expertise is valued and resources will be retained to ensure…[such] capabilities continue…" (Canadian Heritage, 1996, pp. 3). The structural change benefits that were communicated at the onset of the change continued to instill sanguinity as the Agency

idea became a reality. Ed Cashman, President of the National Component of the Public Service Alliance, has summed up his optimism in the following statement, "…we were assured that we would be better off under [the] new organization, than if we had remained part of the Public Service (PSAC, 2002, para. 3). All of the positive reactions to the anticipated change were a direct response to the benefits communicated throughout the organization.

There are plenty of attractive characteristics attributed to the Agency design. The conceptual framework for an Agency structure is extremely appealing to those people who believe in a more efficient and effective organization. With far less political interference, an Agency within the federal government is able to make decisions and act upon decisions in a much more timely fashion. In terms of Parks Canada's human resources, the decision-making process and collaboration activities can be improved significantly in part because the employer-employee connection is enhanced through its own union arrangement. Of the approximately 5000 people who work for Parks Canada, 90% work outside of the National Capital Region (Government of Canada, 1998b). Such a decentralized organization relies on communicating effectively across the system. Therefore, the management and communication measures throughout the system need to be championed by an appropriate leader who shares the same vision as the employees.

When the Agency was formed in 1998, confidence in a reliable leader was shared throughout the organization when Tom Lee was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer. The Prime Minister, advised by Sheila Copps (Minister of Canadian Heritage) and Andy Mitchell (Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage), was praised for his decision to assign Mr. Lee the task of guiding Parks Canada into its new structure (National

PSAC, 1998). The National Public Service Alliance of Canada confirmed their support in the following statement outlined in a news update following the Proclamation of the agency and appointment of Mr. Lee:

> If the [appointment of Tom Lee] seems like some sort of dream come true, part of the dream will have been as a result of the very hard and dedicated work of many but perhaps none more than the employees of Parks Canada and what is now to be their Chief Executive Officer … The new CEO of Parks Canada is also somewhat special and clearly a leader in respect to human resources and the management of human resources. Mr. Lee has and will continue, we believe, to manage based not so much on 'power' and clear authority but more on logic and a set of Values and Principles that he has endorsed and which were put together by a consultation process with unions such as the National Component and management jointly. (National PSAC, 1998, 21 December 1998 section, para. 6 & 7)

In addition to a supportive welcome issued to Mr. Tom Lee, the National Public Service Alliance of Canada also stated that "the new Parks Canada Agency will be different than the past – respect, dedication, trust among other actions and ways of doing business will be more than just words" (National PSAC, 1998, 21 December 1998 section, para. 10). Clearly the employees represented by PSAC were very excited about the prospect of becoming an Agency at the early stages of development. Indeed, optimism surrounding the new Agency was apparent among many Parks Canada employees.

1.3   Understanding How Change Impacts Employees

It is widely accepted that any change in management inevitably has some sort of impact on all those affected by the organization. "When managers endeavor to alter

organizational structures, they must take into account how these actions will be perceived" by their employees (Frederickson & Perry, 1998, pp.125). The importance of understanding how the changes will be perceived amongst the workforce, in advance of the transformation, is critical to the successful implementation of change. Managers must become aware of the various concerns, expectations, hopes, and fears that their employees will have when the plan for change is announced. Anticipating and confronting these perceptions and reactions is the cornerstone to enacting meaningful change (Frederickson & Perry, 1998). Perhaps the best explanation for this strategy is that people's behaviour is based on their *perception* of what reality is, not on reality itself (Robbins & Langton, 2001). Guiding employees through a transitional stage by honestly addressing their concerns helps to ensure that the reality perceived by the employees is aligned with reality itself.

Organizational change in the public sector occurs under a very special set of circumstances and influences, which are different from those experienced in private sector companies. Frederickson & Perry (1998) observed that public reform proposals typically develop during an election year and the changes often take place following a change in government leadership. This observation leads to suggest that the goal of administrative reform may become blurred by that of political salience. The political influence, which is part of the public sector work environment, can create a condition where the credible concerns of employees and other internal stakeholders are superceded by the external political forces that inhabit the work environment. As such, government reform efforts have traditionally been introduced with much fanfare and hyperbole due to their political nature (Frederickson & Perry, 1998). In terms of Parks Canada, the extent

to which politics influenced the organizational reform is debatable; however, the observations made by Frederickson and Perry (1998) coincide with the timing of the changes that have occurred in its administration. For example, Parks Canada moved into the Department of Canadian Heritage shortly after Prime Minister Jean Chrétien took office on November fourth, 1993, and once this occurred, the notion of administrational reform quickly came into play.

Frederickson et al. (1998) follow through with their observation by linking it to the perceptions of employees who end up living through the changes that take place. At the onset of the proposed change, the hyperbole focussed around the need for change is accompanied by purported benefits of the reform effort that far exceeds reality. These expected benefits tend to be articulated as the salvation for all the imminent problems that the organization is about to face and therefore the reform effort is sold as the panacea. The potential problem with this approach is that it creates a set of expectations among the employees that may not be realized in the long-term.

As previously mentioned, organizational change inevitably impacts employees to some degree, and it has been demonstrated that expectations are linked to how severe the impacts can be, but what exactly are the impacts and why do they matter? St. Amour (2000) contends that a shift in organizational structure can be extremely exhilarating for some, but it can also cause confusion, low morale, turnover and decreased productivity. Worrall, Cooper and Campbell-Jamison (2000) state that one of the most devastating effects of a structural change can occur when the nature of the relationship between the employee and the employee is damaged. Other notable effects include reduced job satisfaction and distrust (Bateman & Strasser, 1984), a decline in motivation (Mowday,

Porter & Steers, 1982; Bennett & Durkin, 2000), absenteeism (Mowday et al*.,* 1982; Clegg, 1983), health (Begley & Czajka, 1993), union issues and job insecurity (Worral et al*.*, 2000). All of these effects, whether acting independently or collectively, have an enormous influence on organizational commitment. Many believe that maintaining and fostering commitment among employees during a period of radical change greatly contributes to speed and ease at which an organizational transformation can occur (Begley & Czajka, 1993; Mowday et al*.,* 1982; Nijhof, de Jong & Beukhof, 1998). Paying attention to commitment levels and conducting damage control when problems arise also helps to eliminate the aforementioned detrimental impacts of change. Organizational commitment is often defined as "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" and if that association is positive, it is a powerful agent for both employers and employees because it generates high levels of personal and professional satisfaction and increased productivity (Nijhof et al, 1998, pp. 243). If commitment levels are not monitored, fostered or considered a priority within an organization the fallout can be calamitous.

1.4   The Importance of Monitoring Commitment in Changing Organizations

For many organizations, monitoring levels of commitment on an ongoing basis is a standard procedure that tends to be conducted both informally and formally within human resources departments. As a profession, human resources management increased its profile as an important and necessary component within successful organizations. The importance of managing employment relationships gained standing when knowledge

became the number one critical resource sought by companies worldwide (Falkenberg, Stone & Meltz, 1999). Since knowledge is derived from people, the most successful organizations are those that most effectively organize and manage people. In today's employment climate, people recognize that their knowledge is what benefits places that they choose to work and if they are not satisfied with the working conditions within their work environment, they often choose to use their assets elsewhere. In the past "the concept of an employment relationship was relatively simple: individuals were hired and expected to perform duties and tasks outlined by the employer, for which they were compensated" (Falkenberg, Stone & Meltz, 1999, pp. 4). Today however, there is competition involved in attracting and maintaining the best people amongst organizations who perform similar activities. As such, employment relationships have grown to include measures that encourage employees to remain committed to the organization. The benefits of this type of relationship are mutual; the employer gains a productive employee and the employee gains an employment framework that responds to their needs.

The most critical periods during organizations' lifecycle are when radical change of any kind occurs. Hal Rainey (1998) examined administrative reforms in government for decades by drawing from and challenging the complex and sprawling literature on the management of organizational change. He contends that change within government departments and agencies is demanding, complex and emotional for the employees and it is important to understand the state of the workforce once the changes have taken place. The value of maintaining positive employee relationships is almost as important as the change itself (Falkenberg, Stone & Meltz, 1999). This can occur by genuinely inquiring

of how the change has affected the employees and developing positive responses that address their needs. The employer-employee relationship is best explained by the research of Bennett and Durkin (1999) who investigated levels of commitment following organizational change. They found that employee commitment levels are very much associated with how the change process is managed. If the purpose for an organizational change is to become more productive, yet the employees' needs are not met throughout or after the change process, than the productivity of the workforce can decline following the transformation due to decreased organizational commitment.

With the amount of research that has been conducted in the field of organizational change we know that: a) commitment is a vital element to any organizations' overall success; and b) commitment is certainly impacted by organizational change. These two facts provide a platform for promoting the need and value of assessing levels of organizational commitment following organizational change.

1.5   Purpose of the Study

Much interest was sparked by with the tremendous amount of change that the Parks Canada Agency underwent throughout the past several years, and it is an interest that was embraced in this research. Combining the curiosity of understanding the structural change with how it affected the employees who work for the Agency sharpened this interest toward gaining a better understanding of the effects of organizational change on employee commitment. This whole concept evolved into two key ideas that formed the basis of this research endeavor. The purposes of this study were to (a) gain insight into the current state of organizational commitment among Parks Canada employees, and

(b) develop a greater understanding of the issues currently affecting organizational commitment.

The independent variables in this study are all demographic and employment characteristics. The six variables that were explored in relation to organizational commitment were sex, age, work location, length of employment, level of education, and job role. Sex, age and level of education are commonly used variables, however a further explanation may be useful for the remaining three variables. An employees' work location was defined using four categories: National Park, National Historic Site, National Historic Canal, and Service Centre. The length of employment variable was operationalized by asking how long an employee has worked *within* the Parks Canada system. This question was measured using years and months. The job role variable inquired if the participating employee was a manager. It was anticipated that these factors might affect commitment and may offer some insight into variations in commitment levels within the Parks Canada Agency.

In addition to the independent variables, three intervening variables were identified as having a proven correlation with commitment. These variables consist of: (a) a belief and acceptance of organizational values; (b) a willingness to put in effort for the organization; and (c) a desire to remain with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982; Nijhof et al., 1998). These three variables mediate between the independent variables and the dependent variable and they have been identified within the survey instrument used to measure the dependent variable – organizational commitment. The organizational commitment variable is generally defined as the relative strength of an

individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Mowday et al., 1982).

All of the variables were examined quantitatively using a survey format. Information about the independent variables were collected on a participant information sheet and the intervening and dependent variable(s) were determined using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. in the early 1980's. Although the OCQ appears to be dated, it remains one of the most widely used and tested instruments for measuring organizational commitment worldwide. For these reasons, it was employed in this study.

1.6   Research Questions

The following research questions directly relate to the purposes of this study by seeking to explain the commitment relationship between the employees of the Parks Canada Agency and the organization itself (Table 3).

Table 3: Research Questions

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1. How committed are employees to the Parks Canada Agency?

2. What factors affect organizational commitment among Parks Canada Employees?

3. What aspects of organizational commitment need improvement?

4. What aspects of organizational commitment are strong?

5. What is the relationship between the intervening variables and organizational commitment?

The questions were formulated using a visual representation of the hypothesized relationships between the independent, intervening, and dependent variables found in Figure 1. This diagram pictorially describes how the variables were envisioned from the onset and it helped to clarify what relationships and outcomes needed to be questioned. The intervening variables and dependent variable were measured using the OCQ and the independent variables, that represent the unique characteristics attributed to the employees of Parks Canada, were measured using a variety of categorical and numeric questions found on a participant information sheet. Other than the anticipated direct relationships between the independent, intervening, and dependent variables (illustrated by the solid arrows), it was expected that there might be interaction effects between each of the different variable types (independent, intervening and dependent). For example, a combination of independent variables, analysed concurrently to organizational commitment, may produce a significant result whereas, when they are analyzed independently they do not appear to have a significant impact on organizational commitment.

1.7 Significance

There is both practical and theoretical significance of conducting a research study of this nature. The potential gains that can be realized if the employer-employee relationship is improved within the Parks Canada Agency represents the practical significance of this study. It has already been alluded to that such a relationship is extremely beneficial for both parties. The importance of this topic to the employees was demonstrated by many people who work for the Parks Canada Agency within the province of Ontario, who helped extensively to develop this thesis and to gain its

Figure 1: Visual Representation of the Research Variables

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES   INTERVENING VARIABLES   DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Sex

Age

Work Location

Length of Employment

Level of Education

Job Type

Main and Interaction Effects (+/-)

Belief and Acceptance of Organizational Values

Strong Willingness to Exert Effort

Desire to Remain in the Organization

Main and Interaction Effects (+/-)

Main and Interaction Effects (+/-)

Main and Interaction Effects (+/-)

Organizational Commitment

Main and Interaction Effects (+/-)

approval within the system. Very few organzations take the time to systematically review the state of their workforce in order to improve the employee-employer relationship, yet it is a key aspect of management training at the university and college level (Fry, Hattwick & Stoner, 1998). The results of this investigation can improve an understanding of working relationships.

The theoretical significance of this study is that there has been very little organizational commitment research conducted within the public sector, let alone an Agency that has newly derived from the public sector. The results of this study will build upon the small amount of existing knowledge that helps public sector employers understand what reactions can be expected from employees following a radical structural and administrational change. These results will also facilitate knowledge-based

recommendations that can be employed to better meet the expectations of the employees. To my knowledge there has not been any published research within the field of organizational commitment that has been conducted within a government institution whose role involves a heritage conservation mandate. Therefore, for the first time, this research project will reveal organizational commitment results for an Agency such as Parks Canada, that may differ from other public or private sector organizations. By comparing the results of this study with other research endeavours that have measured organizational commitment, some unique commitment characteristics may be observed for those people working within the Parks Canada Agency. The more information collected and contributed to the organizational commitment body of literature, the better able managers will be to direct people in a way that best suits the objectives of both the organization and the employee.

2.0 Literature Review

The significant organizational changes that the Parks Canada Agency underwent during the past several years formed the problem that this thesis addressed. Specifically, this research endeavour sought to explore the current level of organizational commitment among employees in order to provide information that can improve the employer-employee relationship. As such, the first body of literature reviewed in this section pertains to the various aspects of organizational commitment. The purpose of the organizational commitment review is to provide an in-depth understanding of the concept and to highlight the various views and experiences that experts have shared. Following the organizational commitment review a more general section on measuring organizational performance is presented to outline the reasons why numerous authors and researchers praise efforts that promote proactive management techniques.

2.1 Organizational Commitment

Commitment within an organization is a complex issue which is demonstrated by the plethora of definitions that have been used throughout the literature for many years. An overview of the definitions will be presented followed by a discussion of the characteristics of commitment, importance of commitment, and measurement of commitment within an organization.

2.1.1 Definitions of Commitment

Morris, Lydka and O'Creevy (1993) indicate that little consensus exists with respect to the meaning of the term commitment. London and Howat (1979) define commitment in terms of the identification with organizational goals, involvement with

one's work role, and a feeling of loyalty to and affection for the organization. Mowday, Porter and Steers' (1982) definition, previously explained states that commitment is "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (p. 27). Within this definition three characteristics of commitment are discussed:

(a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership with the organization (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 27).

Furthermore, Nijhof, de Jong and Beukhof (1998) define commitment as "a sense of loyalty to and identification with the organization, the work and the group to which one belongs" (p. 243). This definition not only includes individual characteristics of commitment (sense of loyalty or degree of effort to work tasks) but also, what is termed organizational commitment, which refers to an acceptance of organizational values and willingness to stay (Gallie & White, 1993). The sense of loyalty and identification one feels towards the organization is expressed in the "motivation to bring effort into one's work, the motivation to take responsibility, and willingness to learn" (Nijhof et al., 1998, p. 243). A precondition to this motivation response is that the employee is well informed and is involved in the decision-making process (Nijhof et al., 1998). All of these definitions are primarily concerned with the experience of the employee and how that experience affects their desire to stay within the organization. In this sense, the complete definition that Mowday et al. (1982) derived to explain organizational commitment is still

considered to be one of the most conclusive definitions and it appears to be the most widely sited within the literature.

2.1.2   Issues Affecting Commitment

There are four broad categories of issues that affect commitment: personal characteristics, role-related characteristics, structural characteristics, and work experiences (Mowday et al., 1982).   These characteristics are embodied in the organizational commitment definition described by Mowday (1982). Morris et al. (1993) argued that personal characteristics do not bear significant relevance in determining commitment compared with the other attributes that affect commitment. In view of this contention, it can be argued that many issues can be more adequately explained through personal characteristics (i.e. age and education). For example, it is suggested that younger employees are more committed than older employees because they are highly motivated to start a career and are able to cope with change, whereas older employees are less committed because they are often disappointed and frustrated when structural instability due to change occurs (Morris et al., 1993). This theory can only be verified if personal characteristics are considered during data collection.

Robbins (1996) discusses role-related characteristics in terms of job characteristics, which refer to skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. If a job contains these elements they are referred to as high involvement jobs. "The high involvement approach relies on employee self-management and participative management styles, where employees at all levels are given authority to influence decisions considering their own work" (Nijhof et al., 1998, p. 244). Robbin and Langton (2001) discuss the concept of high involvement jobs and how they can help ease stress

during organizational change. If employees feel that they have the ability to influence what happens with their job and with the organization because they have been given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, then they will understand and cope with change more successfully than employees who have not had such opportunities. Role-related characteristics of organizational commitment are also discussed in terms of job scope or challenge, role conflict, and role ambiguity (Mowday et al., 1982; Allen & Meyer, 1990). These three qualities need to be in balance with one another for an employee to feel a sense of satisfaction with what they are doing. If there is an insufficient amount of challenge involved with individuals jobs they tend to behave more negatively than someone who has a greater job scope. Of course, this effect only occurs insofar as the challenges, which are presented, are reasonable. Role conflict and ambiguity have also been found to be inversely related to commitment. It is clear that employees express more commitment to an organization if they are provided with clear and challenging job assignments (Nijhof et al., 1998).

According to Mowday et al. (1982) decentralization and participation in decision-making are the most important structural characteristics that influence commitment. There has been significant attention from researchers that focus on the manner in which structure affects employee attitudes. Allen and Meyer (1990) continue to develop the notion of emotional attachment to an organization as expressed by employees through various attitudes. The whole concept of structural characteristics suggests that the way an organization is organized has the ability to influence commitment. Fry, Hattwick and Stoner (1998) suggest that commitment will increase in a flat organization where co-ordination and control are based more on shared goals than on rules and procedures and

where employee participation is encouraged. This concept of deformalization not only helps to improve organizational commitment but also organization efficiency. Participation in decision making must also be discussed in terms of organizational structures because large bureaucratic organizations tend not to be as proactive in trying to incorporate employee ideas into the decision making process (Lipsky, 1980). In order to gain insight about this relationship, information needs to be obtained regarding how employees feel about their experience within the organization (Lipsky, 1980).

The fourth category of organizational commitment characteristics is represented by the work experiences that occur during an employee's tenure with an organization. "Work experiences are viewed as a major socializing force and as such represent an important influence on the extent to which psychological attachments are formed with the organization" (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 34). There are several work experience variables that have been found to be related to organizational commitment such as personal importance to the organization, positive attitudes toward the organization, social involvement, leadership style and group norms regarding hard work (Mowday et al., 1982). When change occurs within an organization these variables can be significantly impacted if the change interferes with positive experiences. Robbins and Langton (2001) discuss how second order change, which is multidimensional, multilevel, discontinuous and radical, can often have an affect on organizational values. For example, if the values of an organization are perceived to have changed during a restructuring period, employees may resist the change because they are strongly attached to the values that they have formed during their tenure within the organization. The problem then lies in the fact that the organizations values are no longer aligned with the employees. The period of

adjustment during the organizational change must address this issue by effectively communicating the organizations intentions by focusing on the benefits of the new direction (Robbins & Langton, 2001).

2.1.3   Importance of Commitment

Committed employees contribute greatly to organizations because they perform and behave on achieving organizational goals (Sutano, 1999). Furthermore, commitment to organizations has been found to be positively related to such organizational outcomes as job satisfaction, motivation and attendance (Bennett & Durkin, 2000). The negative effects associated with a lack of organizational commitment include absenteeism and labour turnover (Bennett & Durkin, 2000). These examples help to demonstrate that workers who are committed to their organization are happy to be members of it. Therefore, employees who believe in the organization and are dedicated to what it stands for, intend to do what is good for the organization. This attitudinal approach reflects the nature and quality of the linkage between an employee and an organization. Oliver (1990) describes this employee-organization relationship in terms of the principle of exchange. Exchange theory is relevant to the attitudinal approach to commitment in that it is reasoned that employees offer commitment in return for the receipt (or anticipated receipt) of rewards from the organization. This view offers a simple way to think about the underlying motivations for why employees behave the way they do toward an organization.   Using Oliver's reasoning it can be hypothesized, for the purpose of illustrating the importance of commitment, that when an organization exerts effort to improve the characteristics that influence commitment among employees, then employees will exert more effort to achieve the organizations goals. This is because they

are receiving the quality personal, role-related, structural and job experiences that greatly contribute to improving organizational commitment.

2.1.4   The Measurement of Organizational Commitment

The conceptual richness and diversity found in the various approaches to defining organizational commitment necessarily lead to diversity in approaches to measuring the construct. There are two different approaches to measuring organizational commitment reported within the literature; however, one method is used more extensively over the other. The most common method for measuring organizational commitment was developed by Mowday et al. (1982). This method employs the previously mentioned attitudinal approach as it conceives commitment as a mind-set, which is relative to the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. This notion is characterized by a belief in the goals and values of the organization, a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to remain with the organization. Using this typology a questionnaire entitled the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire was developed and designed by Mowday et al. (1982). The short 15-question survey operationalized the concept of organizational commitment and it was extensively used and tested to make sure it is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring organizational commitment.

It is also important to note the other method of measurement employed to measure organizational commitment. This method uses a behavioural approach, which is largely concerned with the process by which individuals come to develop a sense of commitment not to an organization, but to their own actions (Oliver, 1990). Two distinct strands of theory are subsumed under the behavioural approach.   The first strand

incorporates the notion of side-bets, which "posits that people become 'locked' into particular courses of action because of past investments which would be lost if the course of action was terminated" (Oliver, 1990, pp. 20). The second line of thought that is inherent within the behavioural approach is the process by which individuals come to develop a sense of psychological ownership of their actions (Oliver, 1990; Allen & Meyer, 1990). Unlike attitudinal commitment, the behaviourists argue that commitment is driven not by an urge to reciprocate the receipt of anticipated rewards but by a desire to remain psychologically consistent across different situations.

The two different methods for measuring organizational commitment are quite different in terms of their fundamental beliefs and it is arguable that either method is valid because they both tend to derive similar grand conclusions when performed simultaneously within a single organization (Nijhof et al., 1998). The method of choice depends on the preference and fundamental beliefs of the researcher, moreover, which is a better method.

2.2 *Evaluating Organizational Performance*

Once an organization undergoes a radical change, the follow-up component can often receive substandard attention because many perceive it as unexciting because all the action took place while the change was occurring (Buckley, Mea, Wiese & Carraher, 1998). Evaluating the effect that a radical organizational change has had on the performance of the organization needs to be deemed an essential part of the change process. This kind of attention gained an appreciation in recent years where organizations established permanent branches solely concerned with change assessment and management (Buckley et al., 1998). One of the aspects of change that especially

lacks lustre and significance when organizations do place emphasis or importance on performance evaluation is the management of employee reactions (Gardner, Dunham, Cummings & Pierce, 1987). This observation is verified by the relatively little attention given to employee concerns during and following change compared to aspects of financial performance (Reilly & Stroh, 1997). This may be caused by the *Management by Objectives* technique that is currently used by many organizations (Fry et al., 1998). If dealing with employee concerns is not a stated objective at the onset of an organizational change then they may not be incorporated into a performance measurement plan. The argument against such neglect is that it demonstrates that employees are not considered an essential component of the organizations performance.

There has recently been more interest in understanding the impacts of change from a human rather than output perspective. Moon (2000) outlines from an employee perspective important issues that have arisen due to changes that have taken place within the past decade. These issues include: employee motivation, organizational effectiveness in relation to employee functions, and performance-based management which comprises pay-for-performance, performance measurement, participatory decision-making processes and a flexible organizational culture. As Balfour and Wechsler (1996) indicate, all of these issues directly relate to and effect organizational commitment. It is understandable then that a renewed interest in employee commitment needs to be fostered and monitored by organizations that are undergoing radical change.

The value of measuring performance is best illustrated by understanding its effect on the overall management of the organization. Although this research paper specifically addresses organizational commitment, it is important to note that it is only one aspect of

performance measurement. Organizations must measure and monitor all facets of the organization as they are all inevitably interrelated and not conducted in a vacuum. For example the goals that are set by the managers must each be assessed for their performance. Such goals may include financial targets, social responsibilities, expected growth and a more open and transparent organizational culture. A plan needs to be devised to measure each of these goals because they all have the ability to affect one another (Fry et al., 1998). A powerful assertion made by the leading experts of organizational commitment is that all organizational goals and the methods used to achieve the goals unavoidably influences the quality of commitment expressed by the workforce (Moon, 2000). Therefore, it is argued that monitoring employee commitment and proactively managing the employer-employee relationship is an essential and integral part of an organizations overall success.

3.0 Methodology

Certain aspects of the methods used in this study derived from a larger research project that was specifically designed for and with members of the Parks Canada Agency. The initial project that was approved by the managers who were participating in the research was going to investigate the following issues in addition to organizational commitment: (a) organizational change and its impact on work situations; and (b) employee agreement toward the current management approach. The Parks Canada Agency Executive Board only approved an exploration of organizational commitment, with a reduced sample size. As such, the methods that are described relate specifically to the permitted terms of research provided by the Parks Canada Agency Executive Board.

3.1 Introduction and Purpose

Utilizing quantitative methods of data collection and analysis, this study examined the current state of organizational commitment among a segment of Parks Canada employees in order to develop a greater understanding of the issues currently affecting commitment within the organization. The purpose of this methods section is to concisely describe the process by which the stated research questions regarding organizational commitment were addressed. The sampling frame approved for this project was exactly 300 people. As such, it was important that all employees within the allowable sampling frame be given the opportunity to share their views so that a greater degree of confidence can be placed on the results. This approach is based on the premise that a higher response rate better reflects the reality of the issue that is being questioned within a population. To reach all the possible participants a survey approach was adopted

and deemed the best method for providing insight into the relationship between organizational commitment and its influential variables.

3.2   The Population and Sample

The population examined in this study included the employees working within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit and the Ontario Service Centre of the Parks Canada Agency (see Figure 2). The Eastern Ontario Field Unit is comprised of one National Park, three Historic Sites and the historic Rideau Canal. There were 146 people employed within this Field Unit when the surveys were distributed. There are four offices that encompass the Ontario Service Centre; three of which are located in Ottawa. At these locations there were 154 potential participants employed throughout the distribution period. The 300 people who represent the total sampling frame vary significantly in terms of their

Figure 2: Location of Participants within Sampling Frame

Eastern Ontario Field Unit	Ontario Service Centres
1. Bellevue House National Historic Site	**6.** Cornwall Service Centre
2. Laurier House National Historic Site	**7.** Walkley Rd. Service Centre
3. St. Lawrence Islands National Park	**8.** Liverpool Court Service Centre
4. Rideau Canal (office in Smith Falls)	**9.** Sheffield Rd. Service Centre
5. Fort Wellington National Historic Site	

positions and roles within the Parks Canada Agency.   Within the Field Unit there are a variety of jobs that are responsible for ensuring the successful operation and maintenance of the sites. These roles include, but are not limited to, Superintendent, Visitor Services, General Works, Heritage Education, Administration, and Enforcement. Very few of the positions available at each of the locations within the Field Unit offer fulltime employment, however it was the fulltime employees who were targeted in this research endeavour, as they have typically been the employees who have lived through the organizational change.

The employees who work within the Ontario Service Centres are also extremely diverse. The purpose of the Service Centre concept is to provide specialized services to the sites that constitute the protected and conserved aspects within the Parks Canada System. These services may include: marketing and research, environmental assessment, historical costume design, archaeological investigation, asset management, educational programming and specialized conservation methods. The Ontario Service Centre embodies four offices that do not share the same regional mandate. They all are responsible for providing services to various sites however the three offices in Ottawa do not limit their expertise to the province of Ontario. Prior to the formation of the Agency, the Ontario Service Centre, located in Cornwall, was a Regional Office. Once the Agency was formed the Regional Office model was discontinued and the Service Centre concept was adopted. The three Ottawa offices, which used to be part of the National Office, were transferred into the Ontario Service Centre because they characteristically provide services to sites rather than the policy and administration initiatives, which are prevalent within the National Office. As such, all of the offices in Ontario that are

deemed to provide a "service" amalgamated into the Ontario Service Centre and are managed under a Service Centre Director who is located in Cornwall. It is important to understand the structural history of these offices because it has been demonstrated that structural changes influence organizational commitment levels among employees (Nijhof et al., 1998).

This research study applied a single-stage census sampling procedure where the exact numbers of employees were known and were easily identified using employee lists at each location. Due to the size of the sampling frame (300 people) it was decided that all employees would be asked to participate in the study and the sample would derive from those employees who chose to participate. The reason for choosing this procedure was to maximize the total number of respondents within the sampling frame in order to achieve a closer representation of the real issues that are affecting organizational commitment. It is also advantageous because valuable information, in terms of population variance, would not be lost due to the potential exclusion of respondents using other sampling methods.

The goal of a single stage census method of research is to ask everyone within the population to complete the survey. It is therefore anticipated that there will be a lot of confidence in the research if a high response rate is obtained. The goal that was originally established for this study was to obtain a response rate of 75% or greater for both the Service Centres and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit because a lot of confidence is placed in the collection process. For example, I presented the rationale for the study at each research location and personally distributed the surveys in order to help ensure that a substantial response rate was reached.

3.3   The Survey Design

The object of a survey is to provide a quantitative or numeric description of some fraction of a population (a sample) by asking relevant questions that address some unknown aspect of the population (Creswell, 1994).   Due to the relatively large population that was asked to participate in the study, it was decided early on that a survey design would be the best method for collecting useful information. During the literature review various tested organizational commitment questionnaires were identified which helped to validate and strengthen an argument to carry out survey research. As such, the benefits of using a survey design for a project of this nature includes: (a) the availability of tested standardized survey instruments that measure organizational commitment; (b) the reach of surveys exceed other forms of data collection; (c) the data turnover is relatively fast once the surveys have been completed; (d) people are familiar with survey studies; (e) they are quick to complete and won't interfere dramatically with the participants' schedule and; (f) the surveys can be completed in a natural setting. Survey studies also enable a large sample, which can improve accuracy in discerning the differences among various commitment characteristics. Specific to the Parks Canada Agency, the survey method was especially beneficial because of the bilingual nature of the organization. Those employees who speak French may have been excluded from this study if interviews were conducted because I, unfortunately, am not bilingual.   By translating the survey instrument into French, all employees, regardless of their preferred spoken or written language, could participate and share their views.

Developing a current measure of organizational commitment that also gains a greater understanding of the issues that are affecting organizational commitment was the object of the survey design. This purpose dictated that a cross-sectional survey method would apply in that all participants would be asked only once to complete the survey. There is the potential for further analysis in a longitudinal study depending on what the findings are from this initial exploration. It may be interesting for the Parks Canada Agency to assess organizational commitment levels again once a certain amount of time has elapsed. The importance of monitoring performance levels has already been alluded to and by simply conducting this study again in the future the Parks Canada Agency will be able to determine if they have improved on their employee-employer relationship.

A combination of procedures was used for data collection once the study was approved and a uniformed approach was carried out at each participant location with the exception of minor details. The approach that was devised was collaboratively developed with the guidance of a Parks Canada Agency advisory committee that was put together for this project. The committee consisted of employees from the Ontario Service Centre and they helped to gain access to key individuals who could arrange for a visit to speak to the employees in order to distribute the surveys. It was essential that this committee participated in the design of this study because they had specialized information about how the Agency is organized, what the apposite lines of command are, and how the organizational culture influences how information is disseminated. Due to the organizational differences between the Ontario Service Centre offices and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit slight variations existed in terms of how the surveys were distributed.

Consequently, both the Ontario Service Centre and Eastern Ontario Field Unit will be described separately.

Eastern Ontario Field Unit Data Collection

When this research project gained support and approval within the Ontario Service Centre, steps toward making contact with each of the sites within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit began. To introduce the study to each of the sites, the Director of the Service Centre sent a memo via email to each of the Superintendents that described the research study and who was conducting it. This initial introduction and assertion of support given by a familiar person within the Agency greatly eased my access to each of the sites. Following the memo, I contacted each Superintendent by phone to personally introduce myself and discuss the following points:

1. The rationale for conducting this thesis
2. My background and understanding of the Parks Canada Agency
3. The benefits of having an external researcher conduct a study of this nature and;
4. What is required from them and their staff.

The purpose of this first phone call was to establish trust with the Superintendent. It has always been very important to me that the participants in this study trust the integrity of this research endeavour and how it was conducted. For employees it can often be a disconcerting experience to share opinions about the organization for which they work. One of the key elements of this study is that the surveys are anonymous and no effort was made to identify anyone. One of the benefits of having an external researcher conduct this kind of study is that the participants could be reassured that their responses would be held in confidence and would not be accessible to the organization. This was one of the

most critical points to emphasize before the Superintendents and their staff agreed to participate. Once this discussion took place, all Superintendents agreed to let me present my thesis to their staff under the condition that participation was voluntary. In some cases once this phone call was made it was easier to maintain a dialogue via email in order to arrange a date and time for a visit.

The date and time in which survey distribution took place varied for each site. The first location that participated in the study was the Rideau Canal. I presented my thesis study and distributed the surveys to those willing to participate at the Rideau Canal's Fall Meeting. This meeting is held annually and all staff (whether seasonal, part-time or full-time) are invited to attend. This visit took place on October 15, 2001, one day prior to a Parks Canada Executive Board decision to stop my distribution to undergo a senior management review of my study. After a month of negotiation several questions were eliminated from the study, however approval was granted to continue the thesis based on the standardized organizational commitment questionnaire that was part of the initial research study.

The meetings with the other four sites that comprised the Eastern Ontario Field Unit took place in early December of 2001. Contact needed to be re-established with each Superintendent in order to reschedule visits for distribution. The distribution procedure at the remaining sites was similar to how it was conducted at the Rideau Canal in that an opportunity to speak to all current staff was granted except at St. Lawrence Islands National Park. At the National Park site I was invited to speak to all of the department heads and supervisors to explain my study and rationale. An employee responsible for various human resources issues made sure to distribute the surveys to all

of the employees on my behalf. Although I would have preferred to speak to and distribute the surveys personally to all employees, I had confidence that every staff member would receive a survey and have the study explained to them. My confidence stems from a familiarity with the staff since I worked at St. Lawrence Islands National Park during the summer of 2000 and I maintained contact with the individual responsible for distributing the surveys.

All surveys were distributed with a self-addressed stamped envelope. At St. Lawrence Islands National Park and the Rideau Canal, employees who chose to participate were asked to mail the surveys back directly to me using the provided envelopes. At Fort Wellington National Historic Site, Bellevue House National Historic Site and Laurier House National Historic Site I was able to meet with all employees personally and because of the small employee numbers, the participants filled out the surveys following my introduction and presentation and I collected them (sealed in their envelopes) on the same day.

The response rate could be calculated for each location because the total number of employees was known (the population) and the number of employees who chose to participate in the study could be determined by counting how many surveys were distributed (the sample). The number of surveys returned, whether in-person or by mail, determined how many people within the sample responded (the response rate). At each site, employees were asked both in the survey cover letter and in-person to return their completed surveys within a two week time period. After a week and a half following each visit, a follow-up phone call was made to either the Superintendent or a contact name they provided, if it appeared as though the response rate was small. This only

occurred for two sites, as it was clear early on that the response rates were going to be satisfactory.

Ontario Service Centre Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process for the Service Centres did not commence until after an approval from the Executive Board was granted to continue the research study on a smaller scale. Once the changes were determined, the Director of the Ontario Service Centre invited me to present my study at a Service Centre Management Meeting. This meeting was extremely beneficial as all managers within the Cornwall office and the offices in Ottawa were present. With a supportive introduction from the Director and a brief presentation of the study, contact names for each location were obtained in order to make follow-up calls to plan suitable dates for distribution. Each person representing the four locations was contacted shortly after the meeting and dates were arranged to meet with the employees at all locations.

Every visit to each Service Centre location followed the same approach and they all took place during the month of December 2001. On a scheduled date I met with the contact person for each office and they arranged to have me speak to the employees at their location. The meetings varied in style from informal walk-around visits where I would meet with smaller groups of employees to more formal meetings where I met all employees in a boardroom setting. For every meeting, I explained the purpose of the research project and why I felt that it is an important area to investigate. I clarified that participation was voluntary and that the surveys were anonymous, meaning no effort will be made to identify people individually. These face-to-face meetings enabled a trusting relationship to develop, as I was able to personally voice responsibility for ensuring the

confidentiality of their responses. I was also able to answer any questions that the potential participants had and I felt more control over the information that was being shared with the employees about my study.

For the most part employees at the Service Centre locations returned their surveys by mail however, they were given the option to complete the survey following the face-to-face meetings if the opportunity presented itself. For those locations where the situation enabled employees to fill out their surveys immediately, I remained on site to collect them. For all surveys filled out on the same day, I still had the participants seal their surveys within the provided envelope so their identity could not be matched if I recognized their handwriting. For those employees who were not present on the day of my visit, the contact person at each site took extra surveys in order to make sure everyone was given the opportunity to participate.

The human resources department for the Ontario Service Centre provided current employee numbers for each location so the total pool of potential participants could be calculated. While I visited each site, I was able to determine how many people chose to participate based on how many surveys were distributed. For the extra surveys that were provided for the contact person if employees were not present on the distribution day, they later contacted me to let me know how many people in total chose to participate. The total participation number at each location created the sample and the number of responses I received determined the response rate.

3.4   Instrumentation

The survey that was distributed to the employees of the Parks Canada Agency within the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit is fairly

representative of typical survey formats (see Appendix B). The survey began with an introductory cover letter that clarified the purpose of the research study, who was conducting the study, and how the study would be conducted. The principal researcher and the thesis supervisor signed the cover letter and contact information was provided should the participants have questions after they complete the survey.

Following the cover letter, the first section of the survey dealt exclusively with the independent variables. The questions contained in this section specifically address the decisive factors that were hypothesized to have an influence on commitment levels among employees within the Parks Canada Agency. By collecting this information possible relationships could be revealed where groups of employees, with similar demographic or work characteristics, share analogous views toward the Parks Canada Agency. The questions range from the traditional demographic attributes (i.e. sex and age) to Parks Canada specific job characteristics (i.e. length of employment and job category). It was important to collect this information in order to gain a better understanding of what types of personal characteristics contribute to differences, if any, in organizational commitment.

The survey instrument used for this study was Mowday's (1982) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire with two additional questions that pertain to commitment levels in association to the Parks Canada mandate. These 17 questions formed Section B in the survey and constitute not only the dependent variable but also the following intervening variables: A belief and acceptance in the organizational values, a willingness to exert effort in the organization, and a desire to remain with the organization. A discussion of the established validity and reliability of items and scales on the

standardized instrument will first be presented, followed by an introduction to the additional items that have been added to the instrument.

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1982) comprises 15 questions and it has been extensively used to investigate differences within commitment among employees within various organizations for almost two decades (Morrow, 1983; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986; Oliver, 1990; Allen & Meyer, 1990; Jaros, 1993; Nijhof et al., 1998; Bennett & Durkin, 2000). The response format employs a 7-point Likert scale with the following anchors: strongly agree, neither agree nor disagree on the balancing check, and strongly disagree. Results of this survey are easily summed and divided by 15 to arrive at a summary indicator of employee commitment. This indicator was the discrete measure for the dependent variable used during the analysis stage. Several items are negatively phrased and reverse scored (questions 3, 4, 6, 10, 13, 15 on this study's survey) in an effort to reduce response bias. The intent of the instrument was that the scale items, when taken together, would provide a fairly consistent indicator of employee commitment levels for most working populations (Mowday et al., 1982). The survey was created by developing questions that measure the intervening variables: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of organizational values; (b) a strong willingness to exert considerable energy on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. Five questions represent each factor and they are outlined in Appendix C.

There has been much written about the OCQ that clarifies the stability, consistency and predictive power of the instrument that goes beyond face validity. Mowday et al. (1979) conducted a study that tested the instrument by devising a

validation strategy that included the use of multiple and diverse samples. In this study the questionnaire was administered to 2563 employees working in a wide variety of jobs in nine different public and private work organizations. In all, the array of both job classifications and work organizations was thought to be sufficiently broad to tap a reasonably representative sample of the working population. The results of this study, after cross-validation examination among job classifications and other various validity and reliability tests, confirmed the theoretical notion that the instrument did indeed measure the hypothesized construct of organizational commitment (Mowday et al., 1982). To date, the OCQ is one of the most widely used instruments for measuring organizational commitment within organizations worldwide (Nijhof et al., 1998).

The two additional scaled items that were added to Section B of the survey focus specifically on how committed employees are toward the Parks Canada mandate. The questions are numbered 14 and 17 on the survey. These questions were included out of interest to see if there are significant differences between how employees feel about the mandate of the Parks Canada Agency and how they feel about the organization of the Agency itself. At the onset of this study it was believed that the employees were very committed to the mandate of the organization but not strongly committed to various aspects of the changes that took place over the past several years. In order to better understand and explore this idea two questions were added to the survey (one negatively phrased) to see how they compare to the organizational commitment summary indicator score. These two questions were purposefully not added into the organizational commitment score because it is important to maintain the proven integrity of the OCQ

instrument. They will, however be analyzed as a subcomponent of the beliefs and acceptance of organizational values intervening variable.

The final feature of the survey is a comment section for participants to share further opinions toward issues of organizational commitment. The advisory committee, formed within the Parks Canada Agency specifically for this thesis, recommended the inclusion of a comment section, as it was believed some employees would want to elaborate and qualify their responses on the OCQ.

3.5   Data Analysis

Once all of the surveys were completed and returned, the data analysis began. A review of all surveys initially took place during the data input process using the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This software program was used during this phase of the project for both descriptive and analytical analysis. All statistical analyses employed a 95% confidence limit. Three main steps were employed to comprehensibly answer all of the aforementioned research questions found in section 2.1. Each step will be described in sequence: (a) response rate information; (b) a descriptive analysis of all discrete measures; and (c) the inferential analysis procedure used to investigate relationships among variables.

The first step of the data analysis provides information that describes the number of returns and non-returns for both the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. This information is presented in a table format with special attention given to whether or not response rate expectations were met (i.e. 75% or greater). The second step of the data analysis procedure reports a descriptive analysis of all independent variables, intervening variables and the dependent variable that will be used during the

analysis in the study. The extent of the descriptive analysis varies because of the types of measures used within the survey instrument. Section A of the survey pertains directly to the independent variables. These variables contain nominal (question 1, 3, 4a, 4b, 7a) ordinal (questions 2 and 6) and ratio data (question 5). Therefore, all questions are explained in terms of frequency and percentage and question 5 is additionally explained by indicating the mean and standard deviation. This ratio level question permits a more detailed description because of its absolute zero characteristic. Questions 7b and 8 on the survey were not described or analyzed to ensure anonymity is maintained among the participants

Section B of the survey is conclusively interval level data and the OCQ questions are descriptively analyzed both independently and collectively. In terms of a descriptive overview, each question is addressed using all permissible measures based on their level of measurement (i.e. percentage, mean and standard deviation). This method creates a detailed picture of the intervening variable questions contained within the OCQ. Appendix C indicates what items within the OCQ pertain to each intervening variable. All of the scaled questions are first summarized individually before being analyzed collectively or with other survey items.

The comments section is also analyzed quantitatively using a method of content analysis. Every respondent who chose to comment on the survey had their responses categorically coded into the various topics raised and a team of five peer reviewers were utilized to confirm an unbiased approach was used to analyze and categorize the comments. Each topic received a distinct code and every respondent who commented was permitted three remarks, which were inputted into the SPSS database. All of the

comments entered into the database were descriptively explained using frequencies and percentages. A cumulative response assessment was also conducted to gain a better understanding of what issues were raised with the highest frequency. Examples of actual comments have been integrated into the results and discussion sections of this report to better illustrate some of the self-diagnosed issues that evidently influence commitment levels within Parks Canada.

In addition to the items on the survey, a few other discrete measures were created by collapsing various items into indicator measures. An organizational commitment score was created within SPSS by computing a variable that adds up all of the scores for each of the 15 OCQ questions and then that number was divided by 15. This process created a summary indicator of the overall commitment level of each respondent. Attention was given to the negatively phrased questions, as they had to be reversed scored. This new commitment score variable is an interval level measure that is comprehensively described by all possible descriptive measures. Summary indicators have also been created for the intervening variables measured within Section B. This was conducted by summing up the participant responses to each of the five questions representing each intervening variable within the OCQ and then dividing that number by 5. Appendix C depicts how the survey items represent the variables, which in turn helps to describe how the summary indicators for the intervening variables were created. The three summary indicators for the intervening variables represented within the OCQ are described using a variety of descriptive measures (i.e. percentage, mean and standard deviation). The last summary indicator that was created represents the mean score for questions B14 and B17, which ask about commitment to the mandate. The commitment

to the mandate indicator will be described using the same descriptive measures as the previously described indicator scores. The common units of measurement used for all summary indicators enables direct comparisons to be made between each of the intervening variables and the dependent variable.

Once the descriptive analysis had been conducted, the items on the survey and the summary indicators were well-known, thus making the inferential research process less cumbersome. Research questions 1 and 5 (Table 1, section 1.1) were addressed analytically using the inferential statistics conducted during this stage of the data analysis. The specific relationships that were tested among the variables are outlined on Figure 1 in section 1.1. In order to compare the main and interaction effects between the independent variables and the intervening and dependent variable(s), correlations were primarily conducted using one-way analysis of variance and factorial analysis of variance. The analysis of variance trials suited the units of measurement between the independent and the intervening and dependent variable(s) because all independent factors were coded as either nominal or ordinal measures whereas the intervening and dependent variables were interval levels of measurement.

To gain a better understanding of how the summary indicators, created for each intervening variable, relate to the organizational commitment score a different set of tests were performed. Simple regression was first used to gain insight into the individual relationship that each intervening variable had with the organizational commitment variable. Once a good understanding was reached in terms of the paired relationships, the analysis progressed to multiple regression. The strength of multiple regression rests in its ability to examine the combined affect that the three intervening factors have on the

organizational commitment variable. The results of this method provided a better understanding of what specifically caused variance in organizational commitment among Parks Canada employees in relation to their belief and acceptance of organizational values, a strong willingness to exert effort, and/or a desire to remain in the organization.

The last relationship that was investigated analyzed the correlation between the summary indicator for commitment to the mandate and the organizational commitment score. This relationship was analyzed as a subcomponent of the belief and acceptance of organizational values intervening variable. The purpose of this analysis was to understand the relationship between an employees' commitment to the organization compared to their commitment to the organizational mandate. This relationship was investigated using simple linear regression as both variables were interval levels of measure.

3.6   Ethical Considerations

To ensure the ethical treatment of the participants in this study all surveys were stored and kept in a secure location for one year following the completion the thesis before being destroyed. Each participating location within the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit will received a copy of the final report after being approved and accepted by the University of Waterloo. The effort to provide copies of the report to all participant locations was carried out to ensure that the results are accessible to participants upon completion. One of the most important aspects of this research was to maintain anonymity for all participants throughout the duration of the study. A concerted and conscious effort was made at all times to uphold that promise.

4.0 Findings

The results of this study are first presented with the response characteristics for the sample followed by the outcome of the descriptive and inferential analyses. All of the statistical analyses conducted served to answer the five research questions that were presented in section 1.1.

4.1 Response Characteristics

Once the surveys were distributed to the employees who chose to participate in the study, it became clear that a decent response rate would be achieved. The initial response rate goal outlined in the proposal for this study was 75%. The actual response rate achieved was 62.6% which is still respectable as mail-return surveys typically do not reach a response rate above 50% (Neuman, 1997) (see Table 4). Out of a sampling frame of exactly 300 employees, 248 people accepted a survey. Of the employees who received a survey, 188 were completed and returned. The response rate characteristics for the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit subpopulations are also presented in Table 4 because they were the two distinct divisions of the Parks Canada Agency that participated in this study.

Table 4: Response Rate Characteristics

Employment Location	Population and Sample	Survey Response	
		n	%
Eastern Ontario Field Unit	146	72	49.3
Ontario Service Centre	154	116	75.3
Total Sample	300	188	62.6

When assessing each subpopulation individually, it is shown that the Eastern Ontario Field Unit had a lower response rate as compared to the Ontario Service Centre (49.3% and 75.3% consecutively). The smaller response rate within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit is due, in large part, to a greater percentage of participants not responding from the Rideau Canal (response rate = 37.2%) as compared to the other sites. The reason for the lower response rate at the Rideau Canal may, to some extent, be due to the high number of seasonal staff who was invited to participate at this location. Overall, the response characteristics for this study enabled a high degree of confidence to be placed in the data analysis because the results represent the views of a substantial proportion of the people who work within the sample.

4.2   Descriptive Analysis

The information that was returned within the surveys has proven to be very interesting. A description of each item on the survey as it pertains to the independent, intervening and dependent variables is outlined in the following paragraphs. The results for each of the independent variables are first described (sex, age, work location, length of employment, education, and job role) followed by the three intervening variables and the dependent variable. The results of each item are interesting on their own and a solid understanding of the raw data provides a substantial amount of knowledge that helps to deduce meaning during the inferential analysis.

Independent Variable Items

There was some disparity between the number of males and females that participated in the study. In both the overall sample and in each participating subpopulation (Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit), more males

participated in the survey than females. For the overall sample the disparity was marked by a 20% difference (60% males versus 40% females). This percentage of male and female respondents for the overall sample is an average of the difference between the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. At the field level 68% of the respondents were male, whereas the gender difference from the Ontario Service Centre was 10% (55% male). Due to the high response rate this disparity was assumed to be representative of the gender difference within the Parks Canada locations included in this study.

The age variable is definitely an interesting item and the results are best understood in an illustration (Figure 3). The most frequent age category of the entire sample is between 45 and 54 years of age. There is not a significant difference in age among those who work at the Service Centre and the Field Unit so this variable will be described in terms of the entire sample. The most striking characteristic about the age variable is that almost 60% of the sample is reaching a retirement age and there appears to be fewer experienced employees to fill their positions from within the Agency.
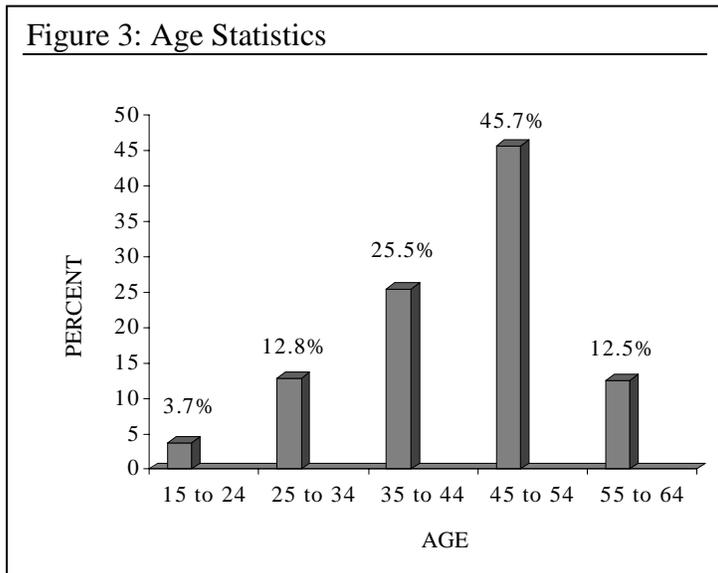
Figure 3: Age Statistics

Although information was collected that explains what sites employees work at within the Field Unit, the work location variable will not be expressed in terms of those

individual sites. Instead, the work location independent variable is addressed by consolidating the National Historic Canal, National Historic Site and National Park categories into one segment called the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. Having one segment for the Field Unit is necessary to protect the anonymity of the respondents at sites where few employees worked during the distribution period. As for the Ontario Service Centre, responses from employees for each Service Centre office were deciphered by a code on the back of the return envelope. Determining where survey responses were coming from at the different Service Centre offices became a desirable piece of information just prior to distribution when it was perceived that there might be different reasons for variations in commitment among employees at different offices. Therefore, the work location variable is described, and was analyzed, using three segments which maintain anonymity because of their adequately large sample sizes: (a) the Eastern Ontario Field Unit – 38.2% of sample (n = 72); (b) the Cornwall Service Centre office – 36.2% of sample (n = 68); and (c) the Ottawa Service Centre Offices – 25.6% of sample (n = 48).

The mean length of employment reported by the participants in the study is 16.25 years. Only 25.8% of the employees surveyed have worked under 10 years, whereas 24.8% have been employed with Parks Canada from over 25 years. These numbers reflect an overall employee base that has an extensive amount of experience within Parks Canada.

All employees who participated in the study had achieved a high school or post-secondary education. There was an option on the survey for employees to indicate if they had completed less than grade 10, however all respondents checked off one of the other options that were available. For this reason, this category was excluded from the

Figure 4: Education Statistics
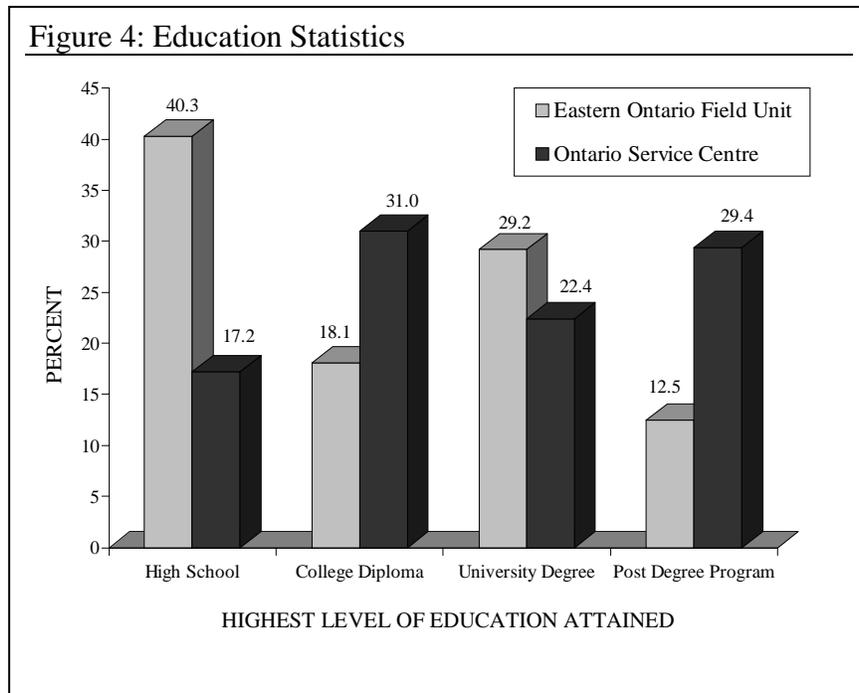
analysis. The four education categories illustrated in Figure 4 depict the dispersion of employee responses within each subpopulation for the highest level of education attained. If a respondent checked off the completion of more than one category of education, the highest level was used for analysis.

As is shown in Figure 4, Education levels vary between the Eastern Ontario Field Unit and the Ontario Service Centre and were purposefully presented separately as education is often a reflection of the kinds of jobs that are available at each location. It is clear that the employees within the Service Centre and Field Unit are well educated as more than half of the employees' surpassed high school to attain a post-secondary level of education. In particular, 29.4% of the people surveyed at the Service Centre have completed more education above and beyond a university degree. The significance of this statistic is clear when compared to the 1996 Canadian Census information that indicates only 13% of the Canadians who responded had attained a bachelor degree and

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just 4% of the Canadians who responded had completed an educational level above a bachelor degree (Statistics Canada, 1996).

The final independent variable to be described is job role. Of the 188 people who responded, 32 people indicated that they were managers. These 32 people make up 17% of the total sample size and they are dispersed almost equally between the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit.

Organizational Commitment Items

Each of the 17 questions asked in Section B of the survey relate specifically to the intervening variables and the organizational commitment dependent variable. The results are generally discussed and details about each question are reported in Table 5. When reading Table 5 it is important to remember that many of the items were reverse scored because they were negatively phrased. As a result, the statistics presented in Table 5 were inverted to reflect the reverse scoring and must be read with the understanding that a smaller mean indicates an item where organizational commitment is weak. For example, question B15 has the lowest score for both the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. This question was reverse scored because it was negatively phrased, but the ultimate interpretation is that the respondents feel the least amount of commitment to the organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. The average variation for all responses in Section B of the survey ranged from 1.64 around the mean (on a 7-point scale) at the Service Centre to 1.85 within the Field Unit. At this stage it is useful to get a feel for how much variation there is among each of the questions, however it is difficult to tell without further analysis whether the variation in an overall response given by the Ontario Service Centre significantly differs from a

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations for Organizational Commitment Questions

Item no.	Mean		Standard deviation		Questions
	OSC*	EOFU**	OSC	EOFU	
B1	5.37	5.46	1.68	1.42	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.
B2	4.37	4.56	2.02	1.82	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.
B3	5.89	5.92	1.58	1.43	Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. (R)
B4	5.02	4.92	2.00	1.93	I feel very little loyalty to this organization. (R)
B5	2.93	3.88	1.88	1.91	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.
B6	4.68	5.14	2.10	1.81	It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. (R)
B7	3.96	4.55	2.03	1.73	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.
B8	5.70	6.04	1.74	1.22	I really care about the fate of this organization.
B9	5.46	5.51	1.75	1.49	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.
B10	3.38	3.94	2.05	1.94	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. (R)
B11	3.90	4.08	1.88	1.85	This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.
B12	5.05	5.11	1.65	1.52	I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.
B13	4.13	4.17	2.10	2.14	There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. (R)
B14	6.03	5.89	1.54	1.66	I feel very little loyalty to the mandate. (R)
B15	2.51	3.13	1.64	1.85	Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees. (R)
B16	4.22	3.97	2.00	1.85	For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.
B17	6.14	6.09	1.40	1.38	I really care about the mandate.

Note: Responses to each item were measured using a 7-point scale with scale point anchors (1) strongly disagree; (4) neither agree nor disagree; (7) strongly agree. *OSC = Ontario Service Centre. **EOFU = Eastern Ontario Field Unit. An (R) denotes a negatively phrased and reverse-scored item.

response given by the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. Any significant differences that were raised within and between independent variables are addressed in the inferential analysis section.

There appears to be little difference between the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit in terms of how they responded to each question in Section B. Overall, the responses that demonstrate the highest commitment scores include B3, B8, B9, B14 and B17. The first three questions listed for demonstrating high levels of commitment (B3, B8 and B9) relate to two of the intervening variables – a willingness to exert effort, and a desire to remain in the organization. The intervening variable that questions respondents about the organizations beliefs and values was not rated among the high commitment scores. Both question B14 and B17 ask about commitment to the mandate. One of the questions is negatively phrased in order to help reduce response bias; however, the high scores for each question demonstrate that the employees within Parks Canada have profound commitment to the Agency mandate.

The lowest commitment scores include B5, B7, B10, B11 and B15. These questions range among all three intervening variables and they demonstrate aspects of the respondent's work situation that are considered more negative as compared to the questions that have higher commitment ratings. The variation in scores for question B7, which pertains to the amount of agreement with the organization's values, appears to be slightly greater than other questions with lower commitment rankings. Although the mean score was lower than others, the dispersion of scores for question B7 varied more. This may indicate an inconsistent level of agreement associated to the organization's values or a variegated interpretation of the question.

The results of the five summary indicators that were developed are shown in Table 6 for the entire sample. All of the scores are a mean total of the questions that encompass each variable. An interesting observation is that each indicator score averaged on the fourth point of the 7-point scale, excluding the commitment to the mandate indicator, which was an added subcomponent to the belief and acceptance of organizational values intervening variable. The fourth point on the scale was described a "neither disagree nor agree" on the survey and the four summary indicator scores that fit this description expressed vary little variation around the mean (standard deviation = <1.4). This indicates that there was a relatively high degree of agreement and very few respondents expressed extreme commitment levels, whether positive or negative, when all questions relating to each summary indicator variable was taken into statistical consideration. Overall, these results describe a workforce that is slightly committed to the organization yet highly committed to the mandate. The reasons why this disparity exists may be better explained by reporting the results for the comment section of the survey.

Almost half (49.5%) of the 188 people who responded to the survey accepted the

Table 6: Summary Indicator Scores

Variables	Summary Indicator Score
Belief and acceptance of organizational values (I)	4.57
• Commitment to the mandate	6.06
Strong willingness to exert effort (I)	4.50
Desire to remain in the organization (I)	4.56
Organizational commitment score (D)	4.54

Note: The intervening variables (I) and the dependent variable (D) are based on a maximum score of 7 and a minimum score of 1.

opportunity to explain some of the issues that were affecting their commitment to the Agency in the comment section. Of the 93 people who completed the comment section, a total of 169 distinct categorical comments were shared, which averaged 1.8 comments per contributor. A detail list of comments is found in Appendix D. Due to the nature of the survey very few participants expressed positive aspects of commitment because they shared their views with the hope of improving a range of characteristics related to their work situations. All of the comments fell into seven broad categories: (a) Mandate Issues; (b) Human Resource Issues; (c) Organizational Change Issues; (d) Perceptions of Senior Management; (e) Policy Issues; (f) Job-specific Issues; and (g) Survey Issues. Each of these seven categories generally outline the areas that employees within the Ontario Service Centre and Eastern Ontario Field Unit feel affect their commitment level to the organization. The detail that was provided within these comments enabled an enhanced understanding and explanation for the results found within the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Table 7 is a cumulative response table that highlights the percentage of comments allocated to each of the seven categories.

There are two categories that had a low frequency of response, mandate issues and policy issues. However, the subject matter of these two categories is worth mentioning because the employees who shared them were very passionate and they deserve to have their views expressed. The issues that were raised in regards to the mandate concern its content. As written by one respondent, "My concerns on existing and working within Parks Canada directly relates to its mandate. I feel that 'cultural heritage' is understated". The two people who had this concern shared the same view and they stated that their commitment to the organization is compromised because they

believe their work is not formally recognized within the mandate. The policy issues category was also infrequently raised. The remarks made in this category relate exclusively to the French language policy. Very clearly expressed "there has been a very poor implementation and enforcement of the French language policy which has affected my ability and desire to work within this organization". This is a strong statement and even though there were only two contributors to this category, the issue exists and should to be recognized.

Table 7: Cumulative Responses for Comment Categories

Category Label	Frequency of Responses	Percentage of Responses	Percentage of Cases
Mandate issues	2	1.2	2.2
Human resource issues	17	10.0	18.3
Organizational change issues	16	9.4	17.2
Perceptions of senior management	88	51.5	94.6
Policy issues	2	1.2	2.2
Job-specific issues	38	22.2	40.9
Survey issues	6	3.5	6.5

Ten percent of the comments dealt with human resource issues such as the need for better succession planning (48% of the comments in this category), overburdened employees due to not enough staff (24% of human resource remarks) and lack of incentives for young and experienced professionals (28% of human resource remarks). An example of these issues is explained by one of the respondents, "Generation X is less loyal than the baby boom generation to employers. Parks had better become competitive with its HR [human resources] policies or it will not attract or retain young staff. The

agency is oriented towards its aging staff and really has no vision for the future…I am leaving the organization for these reasons".

The organizational change issues category elicited 9.4% of the total number of comments reported. In order for a comment to be considered an organizational change issue, a respondent needed to make reference to the changes that took place when Parks Canada became an Agency. Of the 16 people who explicitly considered the organizational change to have an impact on their commitment, 72% of this group stated that the Agency construct is the wrong design for Parks Canada. To further breakdown this notion, 54% shared that the Agency design hinders Parks Canada from achieving its mandate and 46% believe that the Agency structure has significantly caused the employer-employee relationship to deteriorate. For example, "I strongly believe that the Agency design was one of the biggest mistakes the federal government has made. Because of the changes I no longer feel like Parks Canada cares about me or my co-workers". The remaining 28% of the comments in this category were made by many of the employees who work within the Ontario Service Centre offices in Ottawa. Their remarks reflected an overall sense of displacement because they were moved from the National Office to the Ontario Service Centre during the organizational changes. One person commented, "Moving to the OSC appears to have been a mistake. There is less support for participation in national and international projects and organizations." Another shared, "We have been reorganized into an office that has a provincial mandate, however we are still tied to a national mandate. How do we function effectively as one if we don't share the same purpose?"

The second largest category was job-specific comments as they contributed to 22.2% of the responses. Any comment that discussed an employee's job or role within Parks Canada was categorized within this issue and most of the comments were positive (64%). The positive remarks included a strong sense of loyalty to the mandate, satisfaction relating specifically to the work employee's are accomplishing, and positive relationships with colleagues within their work environment. The following are samples of these comments:

- "Very rewarding conservation work because of the quality of the Parks collection"

- "I happen to work at a great location with great people, which is making all the difference in my job right now"

- "I love contributing to a cause I profoundly believe in every day"

There were some negative comments within this category (36%) that pertained to not feeling valued within their specific job situations and not having the resources to effectively meet job requirements. All of the comments that had a negative message were all introduced by first stating that the employees enjoyed their job. For example, "I love what I do and I get excellent feedback from the people I work with, but it's frustrating to constantly feel undervalued within an organization I work so hard for."

The most salient figure within Table 7 is the amount of comments shared that express views toward senior management in the National Office. Comments directly related to this category were shared by 94% of the respondents. Many comments were directed at a distrust of management. For example,

There is a very clear match between my professional purpose and the mandate of the organization. I should be ecstatic, but I despair. Parks is not fulfilling its mandate and management refuses to acknowledge what a betrayal this represents for employees.

Others comments pertained to a perception that the National Office is disconnected from the Field (i.e. "No one at the top seems to care about the sites themselves"). The majority of the comments in this category (73%) made reference to commitments that senior managers have communicated which have been left unfulfilled. For example, one respondent wrote, "I have no faith in senior management (Parks Canada Executive) to do the 'right thing' for Parks Canada, its resources and its staff. Too many times have I been let down. They love to talk the talk, but forget they then need to walk the walk". Another participant shared, "While Parks Canada's mandate is laudable, the actual practice is pathetic. Senior managers seldom have the courage to stand up for what we believe in. They say they do, but I'm tired of expecting more than inaction from those who keep promising to make things better". Of the 88 comments that were shared in this category, only one was slightly positive, "The agency structure has the potential of being great, we needed a new face. I think we're still in the process of working out the glitches".

The last category of comments was directed at the survey instrument that was used for this project. One of the comments questioned why there was not a section devoted to learning more about how the organizational change has specifically influenced commitment to the organization. The remaining five comments suggested that the survey needed to better define the difference between commitment to "the management of the

organization" and "the mandate of the organization". These comments are valid and have been addressed in the Discussion section of this report.

4.3   Inferential Statistics

All of the results up to this point have focussed on describing the characteristics of a single variable. It is now time to see how the variables relate to one another. The inferential statistics that were conducted investigate the main and interaction effects between the independent, intervening, and dependent variable(s) and they are all analyzed at the 95% confidence level. The results will be explained in the three steps shown in Figure 5. The

Figure 5: Step for Reporting Inferential Statistic Results

Step One:

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES → DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Step Two:

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES → INTERVENING VARIABLES

Step Three:

INTERVENING VARIABLES → DEPENDENT VARIABLE
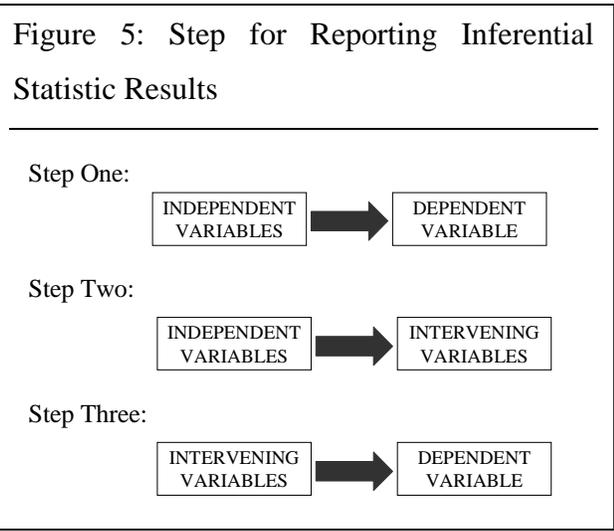
analysis will first be described with the independent variables as they relate to the dependent variable. Analyzing the effect of the independent variables on the intervening variables will follow the first step. The final stage of the results that will be described examines how each of the intervening variables influences an employees' overall commitment to the organization.

The main effects between each of the independent variables and the organizational commitment score are displayed in Table 8. The independent variables, sex and job type did not have statistically significant differences. The sex variable has

Table 8: Comparative Analysis between Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent Variable	Organizational Commitment			
	n	Mean	T-value	Sig.
Sex				
females	75	4.11	.438	.876
males	113	4.49		
Job Type				
not a manager	156	4.51	.638	.586
manager	32	4.67		
Independent Variable	n	Mean	F-value	Sig.
Work Location				
Service Centre – Cornwall	68	4.66	5.026	.007*
Service Centre – Ottawa	48	4.06		
Eastern Ontario Field Unit	72	4.75		
Length of Employment				
less than 8 years	41	5.15		
8 to 16 years	47	4.33	4.282	.006*
16 to 24 years	50	4.35		
more than 24 years	50	4.43		
Level of Education				
high school	49	4.67		
college diploma	49	4.41	.578	.630
university degree	47	4.65		
post degree education	43	4.42		
Age				
Under 35	31	4.80		
35 to 44	48	4.59	.746	.526
44 to 54	85	4.41		
55 and Over	23	4.57		

Note: The mean values represent the average score administered on the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. The minimum score is 1 (low commitment) and the maximum score is 7 (high commitment). * $p < .05$.

the lowest t-value (.438) when associated with organizational commitment, which demonstrates that gender does not explain significant variations in commitment even though there was a slight difference in scores between the women (mean = 4.11) and men

Figure 6: Means Plot for Length of Employment and Organizational Commitment
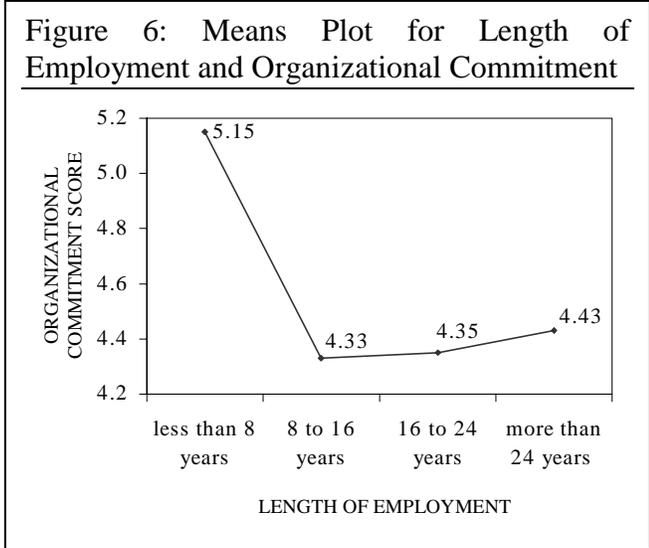
(mean = 4.49). An employees' position as a manager also does not influence commitment levels compared to employees who are not in management positions (sig. = .586).

There were significant relationships found between two independent variables and the dependent variable: (a) work location (p = .007); and (b) the length of employment (p = .006). The work location variable is segmented by the Cornwall Service Centre Office, the Service Centre offices in Ottawa and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. The results depicted two homogeneous subsets among this segment that grouped the Cornwall Service Centre office and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit together. The organizational commitment score for employees at the Ontario Service Centre offices in Ottawa were significantly lower than both the Cornwall office (p = .027) and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit (p = .007). As such, organizational commitment (at the time of survey distribution) is variable that was shown to affect organization commitment is the length of time in which people have worked within Parks Canada. This variable was segmented by eight-year intervals (the largest interval was open-ended) in order to create equal sample size

categories while ranking the segments from least years worked to most years worked. A means plot describes the variations in commitment between each of the length of employment categories (see Figure 6). The results show that those employees who have worked less than eight years have significantly higher levels of commitment as compared to employees who have worked more than eight years. The greatest difference occurs between those who have worked less than eight years and those who have worked between eight and 16 years within Parks Canada (p = .011). This demonstrates that there is a significant drop in commitment for those employees who have worked the longest within the organization.

The last two independent variables to be discussed are level of education and age. Both of these variables did not reveal a significant direct relationship toward organizational commitment. An individual's education was not a factor as all of the mean scores for each educational category were very similar (p = .630). The age category had slightly more variation where those under 35 had the highest mean (4.80), however, the amount of variation was not large enough to indicate that a person's age bears any direct influence on their commitment to Parks Canada (p = .526).

There was only one interaction effect between independent variables when compared to the dependent variable. When age and work location (based on the three segments – Cornwall Service Centre, Service Centre offices in Ottawa, and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit) are examined together against the dependent variable it is shown that an employee's age and their commitment to Parks Canada differs depending on where they are working (F = 4.423, p<.001). Details of the relationships will not be revealed in order to protect the identity of the participants.

The second step of the inferential statistics analysis was to examine the main and interaction effects between the independent variables and the intervening variables. The results from this stage offer further analysis of the significant relationships discovered in the first stage. All of the main and interaction effects between the independent and dependent variable(s) that were not significant in the first stage are also not significant when associated with the intervening variables. This similarity is due to the proven correlation between the intervening variables and the dependent variable. Therefore, the following statistics that will be described indicate what aspects of commitment (the intervening variables) influenced the significant relationships discovered between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

The two significant main effects between the independent and dependent variable(s) that were identified as causing variations in commitment levels were work location and length of employment. After further analysis, it was discovered that the variations in commitment levels at different work locations were due to significant variations in two intervening variables: (a) a strong willingness to exert effort ($p = .001$); and (b) a desire to remain in the organization ($p = .005$). The comparison results for each work location to the intervening variables indicate that the Service Centre offices in Ottawa have significantly lower commitment scores for the willingness to exert effort variable ($p = .009$ compared to the Cornwall office, $p = .001$ compared to the Eastern Ontario Field Unit) and the desire to remain in the organization variable ($p = .006$ compared to the Cornwall office, $p = .012$ compared to the Eastern Ontario Field Unit). The scores for the belief and acceptance of values variable do not differ significantly for people who work at different work locations. These results demonstrate that there is

agreement across locations in accordance to an employee's belief and acceptance of organizational values, however, employees in the Ottawa Service Centre offices differ in their willingness to exert effort for the organization and they do not have as strong a desire to remain in the organization compared to employees who work at other locations.

When the intervening variables were tested against the length of employment variable, statistically significant relationships were found although they just reached the 95% confidence level. For example, both the belief and acceptance of values and a desire to remain in the organization variables had an overall significance value of exactly .05 when compared to the number of years that employees have worked within Parks Canada. After analyzing the category comparisons within the length of employment variable to each intervening variable other significant relationships were found. For the belief and acceptance of values variable, employees who have worked less than 8 years vary significantly from employees who have worked between 8 and 16 years ($p = .041$). For the desire to remain in the organization variable, the employees who have worked less than 8 years vary significantly from all other length of employment categories. In both cases, the employees who are newest to organization expressed higher commitment scores within each intervening variable.

The only combination of independent variables that demonstrated an interaction effect to the organizational commitment score was age and work location. In this case, each intervening variable significantly differed between work locations segmented by age. Explicit details that state what age groups differ in their organizational commitment at each location, based on the intervening variables, will not be reported in order to

maintain participant anonymity. The importance of this finding is that there are significant differences in commitment, based on age, between each work location.

The final stage of the inferential analysis is to compare the intervening variables to the organizational commitment variable. As expected all of the intervening variables are significantly correlated to the organizational commitment score ($p = <.001$). These relationships were expected because the intervening variables are embedded within the Organizational Commitment variable. The question that now remains is what is the dispersion of variation among the intervening variables in regards to the dependent variable? A multiple regression analysis was conducted to answer this question and the results indicated that 81.4% (R^2) of the variation within the organizational commitment score is explained by the questions relating to the desire to remain in the organization variable. Once the strong willingness to exert effort variable was added into the model, 90.1% (R^2) of the variation was explained. There was relatively little variation in the dependent variable explained by differences in the belief and acceptance of organizational values as it contributed to just 2.4% of the explained variation in the organizational commitment score ($R^2 = 92.5$). Although all intervening variables make a significant contribution to the explanation of variations in the dependent variable, there is still 7.5% variation left to be explained. This remaining variation is due to something other than the three intervening variables.

An employee's desire to remain in the organization (ß = .427) has almost twice the affect on the organizational commitment score than changes to the belief and acceptance of organizational values (ß = .290) (see Table 9). The affect of an employee's willingness to exert effort for the organization on the organizational commitment variable

Table 9: Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Organizational
Commitment

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	ß
Step 1			
Desire to Remain in the organization	.88	.032	.902
Step 2			
Desire to remain in the organization	.583	.034	.598
Willingness to exert effort	.440	.036	.424
Step 3			
Desire to remain in the organization	.416	.037	.427
Willingness to exert effort	.345	.034	.333
Belief and acceptance of values	.263	.035	.290

falls in between the other two intervening variables (ß = .333). Overall, the statistics

show that an employee's desire to remain within Parks Canada has the greatest bearing

for determining variations in their commitment to the organization. The other two

intervening variables are also significant, but not as indicative as one's desire to stay

within the Agency.

Figure 7: Commitment to the Mandate versus Commitment to the Organization
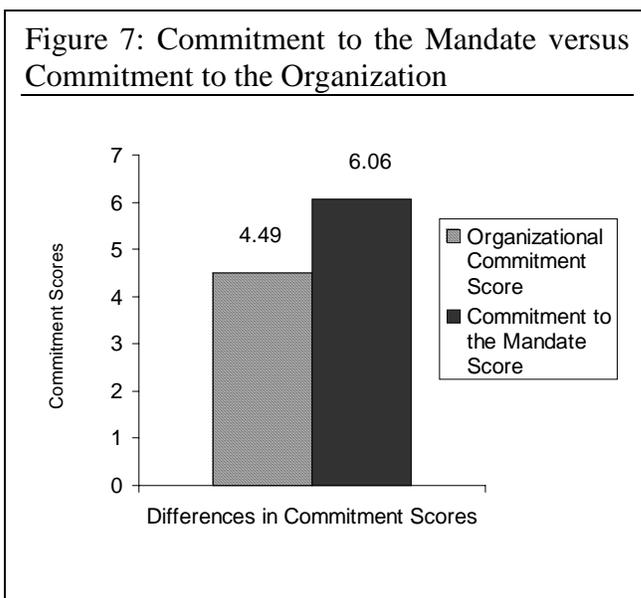
The final comparison to be revealed indicates the difference between each employee's organizational commitment score and the mean score calculated for the two questions that pertained to commitment to the Agency mandate. Figure 7 illustrates the difference

between these two scores for the overall sample. The variation between the scores is statistically significant ($p = <.001$) which indicates that the employees who were surveyed are considerably more committed to the Parks Canada mandate than they are to the current state of the organization.

Once the significant difference between the organizational commitment score and commitment to the mandate score was determined, further analysis was conducted to identify if related interactions among other variables exist. During this investigation it was found that the highest commitment scores reported toward the mandate were expressed by employees who have worked the longest within the organization, whereas the same employees were among those who reported the lowest organizational commitment scores. This shows that the employees who have the most tenure within the organization are also the most dedicated to the mandate; however, they are the least

Figure 8: Commitment Gap between Organizational Commitment and Commitment to the Agency Mandate by Work Location
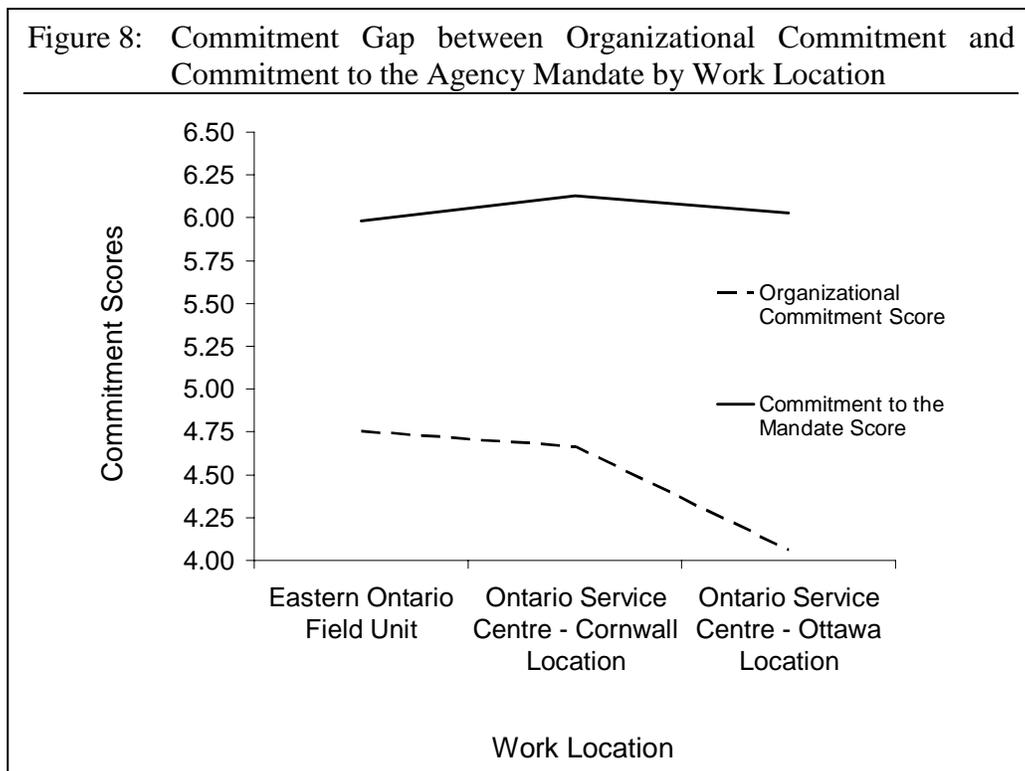
committed to the current state of the organization. Another example that demonstrates the difference in commitment to the mandate and the organization is displayed in Figure 8. This figure illustrates the profound difference between commitment to the mandate and commitment to the current state of the organization as reported at different work locations. Although a large gap is apparent at all locations, it is accentuated in the Ottawa locations within the Ontario Service Centre.

5.0 Discussion

There were two questions that initially contributed to the purpose of this investigation. The first was to gain insight into the current state of organizational commitment among Parks Canada employees and the second question was centered on developing a greater understanding of the issues that are affecting commitment to the Parks Canada Agency. The employees within Parks Canada who were asked to participate in this study, which was designed to answer these questions, work within the province of Ontario in either the Service Centre or the Eastern Field Unit. Consequently, all of the results are specific to these locations and cannot necessarily be generalized to other Parks Canada work locations without further analysis.

Using an Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) as the main component of a survey distributed to the employees at each research location, it was determined that the overall commitment level to the Parks Canada Agency is moderate. This finding for the overall sample is an average of the varying commitment levels for all employees who chose to participate in the study. Exclusively studying the overall commitment value attributed to the entire sample would lead to the conclusion that employees are somewhat indifferent toward the Parks Canada Agency. However, such a deduction would be far too simplistic and meaningless for initiating improvements in organizational commitment levels. In fact, the foundation of this research endeavour is based on the values and benefits of evaluating employee commitment for both the organization and the people who work within it. As such, it is critical to understand how demographic and employment characteristics affect organizational commitment because they in turn reveal the specific factors that affect variations in commitment levels.

The results of the analysis that investigated the relationships between the demographic and employment characteristics to outcomes in organizational commitment, found that both an employee's work location and how long they have been employed at Parks Canada significantly impacts commitment levels to the organization. The other factors (sex, age, level of education and whether or not the respondent was a manager) were not found to directly cause variations in commitment. The insignificant relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable diverged from other organizational commitment studies where sex, age, level of education and management position were found to interact and influence organizational commitment within public sector organizations (Crewson, 1997; Steinhaus and Perry, 1996).

As for the work location variable, the results showed that the employees who work in the Ottawa offices of the Ontario Service Centre have considerably lower commitment levels than their colleagues in the Cornwall Service Centre office or those within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit. According to the comments that were shared from those who work in the Ottawa locations, the lower commitment scores may be attributable to feeling displaced in the Ontario Service Centre. It is clear that many employees from the Ottawa locations disagreed with their transfer into the Ontario Service Centre from the National Office. One respondent suggested "there was little effort made to effectively integrate [their] professions into the Service Centre and educate others in the Service Centre about [their] activities". Other unique comments shared from the Ottawa Service Centre locations dealt with the exclusion of cultural heritage values in the current wording of the mandate. Comments, such as these, were inimitable

to the Ottawa locations which may help to explain why commitment levels are lower there than other locations.

The differences in commitment between distinct work locations were also a factor for variations in motivation and satisfaction in Gardner et al.'s (1987) study that investigated employee reactions to organizational change. In the Gardner study, the variations were explained as a result of different procedures used to implement the change at the different locations studied. These findings may hold merit for explaining why the employees in the Ottawa locations have lower commitment considering the organizational change had a unique effect on their work situations. Once the new Agency was formed the Ottawa offices moved into the Ontario Service Centre from the National Office. If the employees were not integrated effectively into the Ontario Service Centre their satisfaction and motivation levels may have caused a significant decrease in their organizational commitment.

How long a person has worked in Parks Canada resulted in a very interesting relationship to organizational commitment. Those who have worked the least amount of time within the organization have the highest levels of commitment. However, those high commitment levels drop significantly for employees who have worked within the organization for more than eight years. This finding was the same across all work locations. In addition, commitment levels began to increase among employees who have worked the longest within the Agency, but those levels do not come close to reaching the high commitment levels expressed by the employees who have worked the least number of years. What is interesting about this finding is that the employees with the least experience in Parks Canada may not have known what the organization was like prior to

the radical changes that occurred in recent years. Morris et al. (1993) found similar results and explain that new employees are excited and optimistic about gaining experience in the organization and are more likely to cope with change whereas employees with more experience feel a deep sense of attachment to their understanding of the organization and feel frustration when structural instability occurs because of change. In order to confirm this assumption further research would need to be conducted that asks more specific questions on how the organizational change has affected commitment. Such research is warranted considering that both of the significant relationships found between the independent and dependent variables can be directly explained by the changes that have occurred within the organization.

There was one interaction effect between the independent variables to the dependent variable. When age and work location were analyzed together to understand their combined effect on organizational commitment, it was found that there were significant differences within age groups from one location to another in terms of how committed they are to Parks Canada. Unfortunately, the relatively small sample sizes within each age-work location category prohibit details of this analysis from being discussed. All of the participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and by discussing which age group at which location had the highest or lowest commitment scores the identities of the participants would be exposed. This kind of detailed information represents the power of evaluating commitment levels using a number of variables that can be used to segment the sample. By understanding what age groups are expressing low commitment levels at different locations, a targeted effort could be made to understand and rectify the issues that are causing dissatisfaction.

The last step of the data analysis examined the variation between the intervening variables in the organizational commitment score. Although all of the intervening variables contribute to organizational commitment the variable that accounts for most of the variation in commitment levels was the desire to remain in the organization. This demonstrates that there are a number of employees who both want to stay in the organization and many who do not. Some of the comments that were made by the employees at the end survey indicate that a personal and professional struggle exists where "employees love what they do for Parks Canada but they hate being subject to the politics and mismanagement of the mandate they strive to achieve". Another respondent stated, "I love Parks Canada but Parks Canada doesn't love me". These comments help to explain why variation existed within the questions pertaining to a desire to remain in the organization. The intervening variable that questioned an employee's belief and acceptance of organizational values did not cause much variance in relation to the other variables. This finding indicates that the sample consistently rated these questions highly on the OCQ.

A very important aspect of commitment, which was not specifically addressed in the OCQ relates to the difference in commitment to the organizational mandate and the management of the organization. The two questions that were added to section B in the survey (B14 and B17) questioned employees about their commitment to the Parks Canada mandate. These questions received the highest scores compared to all of the questions asked in the OCQ, which unmistakably indicates that the employees who were surveyed are highly committed to the mandate. Moreover, the summary indicator score that was devised to specify commitment to the mandate was found to be significantly

different from the organizational commitment score. These results clearly demonstrate that there is a significant difference between commitment to the mandate and commitment to the management of the organization.

5.1 Implications

The findings for this study demonstrate that there are significant issues affecting commitment within the Parks Canada Agency at the locations where the survey was distributed. Where employees' work and how long they have worked for Parks Canada definitely contribute to different degrees of commitment among employees. However, to adequately address the caveats that were revealed in this study, a more in-depth analysis would be beneficial to gain a better understanding of what are within the caveats that influence commitment. For example, the OCQ was able to provide a fairly good idea about varying commitment levels but it does not explicitly explain why commitment levels vary in the organizations where it is used. The demographic and employment characteristics are useful segmentation factors as they help to indicate where and who has high or low levels of organizational commitment, however, they too are only capable of explaining so much. The comment section that was included in the survey was extremely beneficial for grasping some of the underlying issues that are specifically affecting commitment at each of the work locations and for understanding what concerns different employment groups are experiencing. In all, these three components (demographic/work factors, the OCQ, and the comment section) were able to provide a reasonably good foundation for gaining a better understanding of organizational commitment within Parks Canada. However, a concerted effort should to be made by senior managers within the Agency to listen and act upon the concerns raised by the work locations and employment

groups that have expressed discontent. By exerting a genuine effort towards achieving a resolution to the many issues that have been raised, commitment levels are more likely to increase, which in turn has benefits for the organization (i.e. lower absenteeism, reduced turnover and higher productivity).

With respect to the research design of this study, other independent factors might be worthwhile in exploring in future studies. The demographic and employment variables are not necessarily the only factors that can be incorporated into a commitment-oriented study. The richness of responses found in the comment section led to many qualitative conclusions about factors that are influencing commitment. For example, it might useful in future studies to analyze characteristics relating to the quality of the employer-employee relationship (i.e. participatory decision-making, autonomy, incentives, and efficacy). These types of characteristics might lead to more accurate conclusions that indicate why or if employees are feeling undervalued.

The implications of these findings reach beyond the interest of the locations that were included in this study. The Parks Canada Agency spans the nation and many other work locations may be interested in reading the results to see if there are any similarities between their situations and what was discovered in this study. There are also numerous groups and people across Canada that devote their time to learning, educating, researching and lobbying for and about Parks Canada and they may be interested in knowing what the employees are feeling within a few locations in Ontario. For those who believe that protection and conservation of our natural, cultural and built resources begins with the front line employees, it will be discouraging to see the low commitment levels among the employees with the most tenure. Furthermore, many people outside the

organization will find it interesting to know that the reasons expressed for low commitment levels are not due to Parks Canada's mandate, but to other factors inherent within the organization. Such factors are amendable to managerial action.

The timing of this study is very important to consider when reading and making conclusions about the results. At the time when the surveys were being distributed the Parks Canada employee union and the management were negotiating the first employment contract under the Agency structure. It is recognized that this type of issue can have an impact of organizational commitment and therefore the results must be interpreted from a time sensitive perspective. The commitment levels that were reported within the locations that were surveyed existed at the time the surveys were distributed (October, November and December of 2001). There is tremendous value in having measurable commitment levels available to the human resources department and other managers because this study can be used as a benchmark for the locations that participated. If a commitment survey was conducted every year the results could be compared to see if improvements were made in areas that received low commitment ratings during previous studies.

5.2   Limitations

There were a number of limitations encountered that profoundly affected the overall potential this study could have had for both the Parks Canada employees and the Parks Canada Agency itself. Most of the limitations were experienced as a result of research restrictions imposed by the Parks Canada Executive Board after the initial proposal had gained support from all participating Parks Canada locations. As such,

many of the limitations will be discussed in terms of what methods were initially proposed for the betterment of the study, but were not fulfilled.

The results of this research were localized to the Eastern Ontario Field Unit and the Ontario Service Centre. As such, the results are very specific to issues encountered at these locations and cannot necessarily be generalized to other locations without further analysis. Although this is a benefit for the locations that were included (they received more specialized attention) the overall strength and weight of the results shoulder less influence at the management level than if a large-scale study was conducted. The initial proposal was developed to investigate all of the sites within each Field Unit in Ontario, the Ontario Service Centre and the National Office. The scope of such a study would have ascertained concrete insight into varying commitment levels throughout the bureaucracy and because of the widespread sample size many of the conclusions could have been generalized to other provinces. The findings from such a large study could have provided significant information for developing a plan that would improve the employer-employee relationship province-wide.

Another limitation of this study was not being able to effectively measure how the organizational change has impacted the work situations of employees. This type of information would have eliminated the need to infer meaning from the responses given in the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Many employees made comments that directly referred to the new Agency structure as being a factor for why their commitment appears depleted. Comments such as these made it clear that the organizational change is a factor although it would have been far more beneficial and accurate for the Agency to

know exactly what it is about the change that is causing lower commitment levels in a systematic and measurable fashion.

During the development of this thesis, it was brought to my attention by several Parks Canada employees, that there might be some value in understanding what employees think about the current management approach. After incorporating this idea into the thesis it became apparent, through a literature research and a pre-test, that perceptions toward management is typically a significant factor for determining employee commitment. Therefore, the initial proposal was designed to question the correlations between the effects of organizational change on employee work situations, perceptions of the current management approach, and organizational commitment. The only aspect of this study that was fulfilled was the organizational commitment section. In the end, it is interesting that the survey responses collected for this thesis evoked reactions to the components of the initial thesis that were removed.

A limitation that was unforeseen until the surveys were being distributed was the complexity and confusion that could surround the definition of organization. Many people found it difficult to answer the question that asks whether the employee's values are the same as the organization's values. Because I was always present during the distribution, I was able to explain that this question should be answered in terms of how the organization is currently being managed. The confusion emanated from strong feelings towards the stated values of the organization compared to the perceived values that are being practiced within the organization. As such, the validity of this question is somewhat uncertain, as some respondents may have interpreted the question differently. Unfortunately, this limitation was not picked-up and revised prior to distribution during

several survey reviews by Parks Canada employees. This is a newly discovered drawback of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire in that it does not recognize the unique characteristics of an organization that has a workforce strongly committed to what the organization represents but not necessarily to how they are managed.

Lastly, the research material for this topic, as pertaining to commitment within Agencies such as Parks Canada, is scattered across numerous disciplines (i.e. psychology, business administration, sociology, public administration, recreation, human resources management and environmental management). Only the most relevant materials were included in this investigation. Some of the references may appear dated, however, every effort was made to search for the most recent materials that concerned the topics being addressed. In many ways, the research for this study was a conglomeration of several disciplines across time, which was pulled together to increase our understanding of organizational commitment within a conservation-mandated organization that is accountable to the public. Some might view this challenge as a limitation. However, the effort that was made to bring organizational commitment to light, within an Agency such as Parks Canada, will hopefully contribute as a starting point for further research related to this field.

5.3   Conclusions and Future Research

There is never an ideal time to conduct an investigation on employee commitment within any organization. There is always something occurring that could cause negative commitment levels to be reported. This type of mindset is common among many organizations, however, the information that can be gained, whether positive or negative, should be embraced by managers because it provides an opportunity to improve

relationships between the employer and the employee. Falkenberg et al. (1999) contend there are only benefits to acting on issues that are a concern to employees whereas inaction increases the likelihood that the problems will subsist and in many cases get worse.

Although the benefit of this study was focussed on the Ontario Service Centre and the Eastern Ontario Field Unit, other work locations could draw upon these findings and start questioning what factors are influencing commitment in their work environment. As such, the value of this study could be extended across the bureaucracy to determine if there are variations in commitment within Canada and the different functional levels (Field Units, Service Centres and National Office). As the principal researcher for this study, the positive repercussions from addressing the concerns raised in a participatory fashion must be emphasized. In many cases the employees who chose to participate in this study took delight in the opportunity to share their views through an external researcher. Simply put, a process for sharing views anonymously, and then having them shared openly and collectively, promotes a sense of caring and commitment from an employer to consider the collaborative views of the employees when making decisions. This kind of activity is aligned with a policy of being open and transparent.

In addition to extending this survey to other work locations within Parks Canada, it would be interesting to see if other organizations with a similar mandate are experiencing or have experienced similar commitment issues. More research relating to why employees are committed to their particular mandate-oriented organization may help answer the following questions. Are they personally committed to achieving the mandate? What is it about the mandate that employees embrace and why? Do they have

respect for their manager, which instills a commitment to fulfilling their goals? Does the organization have the best equipment or assets for the employment position people are trained for? All of these questions would help to clarify the strengths and weaknesses within organizations such as Parks Canada, which would help develop more focussed recruitment, selection and retention programs.

In conclusion, this research study highlighted the importance and complexity of commitment within organizations, which then evolved into the discovery of specific commitment issues that can be improved within the locations surveyed in the Parks Canada Agency. While it was found that employees at these locations had serious contentions regarding their perceptions of senior management, their overall commitment to the mandate of the organization remains strong. It was also found that an employee's work location and tenure within the sample influenced the overall commitment expressed toward the Parks Canada Agency. The work location factor was apparent for employees working in the Ottawa offices of the Ontario Service Centre and their lower commitment levels were, in part, explained by a lack of perceived integration into the Service Centre following a transition from the National Office. The employees who worked the least amount of years reported higher commitment levels than those who have worked for more than eight years. Some inferences were made about why this relationship exists, however further research is recommended to understand and manage the effects of the organizational change on employee commitment to the Parks Canada Agency.

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Appendix A: *Parks Canada's Human Resources Values and Operating Principles*

VALUES & OPERATING PRINCIPLES	As part of its Human Resources Regime, the Parks Canada Agency has identified Values and Operating Principles that will govern how employees interact with each other.

Values

Competence

Competence refers to the knowledge, abilities, personal suitability and other qualities required to perform effectively in the workplace. Competence resides in individuals, working independently or as a member of a team, and in the organization as a whole. We:

- commit to employing competent people
- maintain and transmit "corporate memory" (i.e. knowledge, skills and experience developed over many years) as an essential part of organizational competence and renewal
- invest in individual development and career planning to maintain the required competencies and to support personal and organizational growth.

Respect

Mutual trust, recognition of accomplishments, self-esteem and regard for others are important elements of respectful working relationships. As a value that is earned and deserved, respect implies that we:

- respect individual differences and different points of view
- recognize individual and team contributions
- respect the need to balance our work and personal lives
- recognize the right of employees to union membership, representation and participation in union activities
- respect and apply principles concerning official languages, employment equity, privacy, health and safety in the workplace, and protection from harassment and discrimination
- foster an environment in which we participate in the organization's activities and decisions
- consult prior to taking decisions that directly affect other employees

Fairness

Fairness means that our activities and decisions are just, timely, impartial and objective. We:

- ensure equitable treatment of employees both individually and collectively while respecting our diversity
- apply equitable processes and our attitudes, acts and decisions are well reasoned
- communicate our practises and decisions openly and honestly
- ensure that all staffing decisions and other human resource practises are free from political influence and other forms or patronage

Operating Principles | The values of Competence, Respect, and Fairness will be implemented in human resources policies and procedures consistent with the following operating principles. These principles are interrelated and therefore they must be considered collectively and in a balanced fashion.

Accountability
- the requirement to be answerable for carrying out our responsibilities in accordance with these human resources values and operating principles

Efficiency
- making the best possible use of human resources, time and money

Effectiveness
- achieving the expected results

Consistency
- acting in a similar manner in similar circumstances

Adaptability
- adjusting to circumstances while encouraging innovation and creativity

Simplicity
- making things as uncomplicated as possible

Openness
- ensuring straightforward and honest communications

Source: Government of Canada. (1998b). *Parks Canada Agency employee information kit: A road map to transition.* (Available from the Parks Canada Agency, Human Resources, 25 Eddy Street, Hull, QC K1A 0M5)

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Exploring Employee Commitment
Information Sheet

The research study that you have been asked to participate in will investigate employee commitment within the Eastern Ontario Field Unit and the Ontario Service Centre. Dawn Culverson, a Master's candidate in the department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, is conducting the study and her goal is to better understand the current level of employee commitment, develop a baseline measurement of employee commitment, and to identify positive commitment factors among the two case study groups.

If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a demographic information sheet and a 17-question survey that is expected to take 6 minutes. All of the responses will be confidential and there are no wrong or right answers. You may decline answering any question if you wish and no attempt will be made to identify you personally. Your responses will be aggregated on a Field Unit or Service Centre level and data will be analysed and reported in such a way that individuals will not be identifiable. As such, there are no anticipated risks to participating and managers may use the information gained to better foster employee commitment within your work environment. The Field Unit Superintendent/ Superintendents of each site and the Director/Managers of the Service Centre will each receive a copy of the final report.

It is acknowledged that day-to-day events may colour your responses in either a positive or negative way. However, all employees are encouraged to respond honestly and with the confidence that their own personal beliefs and responses will be kept confidential.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics. In the event you have any question or concerns about your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes at (519) 888-4567, ext. 6005.

All raw data obtained during this study is confidential and will remain confidential. All data will be stored in a locked location available only to Dawn Culverson for a maximum of three years commencing April of 2002. Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Dawn Culverson at dculvers@ahsmail.uwaterloo.ca or Dr. Paul Eagles who is the faculty supervisor for this project at eagles@healthy.uwaterloo.ca (519) 888-4567 ext. 2716.

Sincerely,

_____   _____
Dr. Paul Eagles   Dawn Culverson
Professor in the Department of Recreation   Principal Researcher, Master's Candidate
University of Waterloo   University of Waterloo

_____   _____
Date   Date

**When you have completed the survey, please seal it in the self-addressed envelope provided
and mail it directly to the principal researcher**

Please ensure that the principal researcher receives this questionnaire by _____

A Case Study Questionnaire on Employee Commitment

SECTION A: Participant Information

1. Male   Female

2. Age

15 to 24	44 to 54
25 to 34	55 to 64
35 to 44	over 65

3. Which of the following categories best describes where you work (choose all that apply)?

National Historic Canal
National Historic Site
National Park Site
Service Centre

4. Please indicate your employment status.

a) Term
Indeterminate
Other (i.e. student/intern):_____

b) Seasonal
Part-time
Full-time

5. How long have you worked for Parks Canada?

Number of Years _____
Number of Months _____

6. Indicate the highest level of education you have completed.

Less than grade 10
High School
College Diploma
University Degree
Post Degree Program
Master's Degree
Doctorate Degree

7a) If you **are** a manager please indicate your level (If you are not a middle or senior manager please go to Question 8).

Middle
Senior   *(continue to 7b)*

7b) What is your area of managerial responsibility (choose all that apply)?

Historic Site/National Park......................
Service Centre/Field Unit........................
Human Resources...............................
Heritage Presentation ....
Marketing/External Relations...................
Cultural Resources..............................
Ecological Resources...........................
Administration/Finance ....
Communications ....
Other: _____
                             Skip to Section B

8. If you are **not** a manager, which of the following categories best describes your role within the Agency?

Office Support Staff ....
Human Resources ....
Administration/Finance..............................
Maintenance ....
Visitor Services ....
Education/Heritage Presentation ....
Planner ....
Research/Development
        Cultural ....
        Social Science ....
        Ecosystem....................................
Warden –   law enforcement, public safety,
           ecosystem management ....
Marketing/External Relations ....
Engineer/Architect....................................
Archaeologist..
Historian ....
Communications ....
Media ....
Other:

SECTION B

Listed below are a series of statements that have been adopted from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982. These statements represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the organization for which they work. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the seven boxes below each statement.

1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

3. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

4. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

5. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

6. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

7. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.

strongly agree	neither agree nor disagree	strongly disagree

8. I really care about the fate of this organization.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

9. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

10. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

11. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

12. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

13. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

14. I feel very little loyalty to the mandate.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

15. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

16. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

17. I really care about the mandate.

| strongly | neither agree | strongly |
| agree | nor disagree | disagree |

Comments:

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Thank you for participating

Appendix C: A Cross-reference of Variables and Survey Items

Variable Names	Items on Survey
Independent Variables:	
Sex	Question 1
Age	Question 2
Work Location	Question 3
Length of Employment	Question 5
Level of Education	Question 6
Job role	Question 7a
Intervening Variables:	
Belief and Acceptance of Organizational Values	Section B questions: 2, 4, 7, 12, 15 (questions 16 and 17 not part of OCQ)
Strong Willingness to Exert Effort	Section B questions: 1, 6, 8, 10, 14
Desire to Remain in the Organization	Section B questions: 3, 5, 9, 13, 11
Dependent Variable*:	
Organizational Commitment	Sum of OCQ questions divided by 15 = organizational commitment score

* analytical inferences about organizational commitment will also be made by investigating the relationships between and within variables.

Appendix D: Categorical List of Employee Comments

Content of Mandate Issues	

Case Number	Comment
39	My concerns on existing and working within Parks Canada directly relates to its mandate. I feel the 'cultural heritage' is understated in the mandate. The mandate states: "On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure their ecological and commemorative integrity for present and future generations". Why can't the mandate incorporate the following… "On behalf of the people of Canada, we are dedicated to preserving Canada's cultural heritage for present and future generations. The greatness of the human spirit and the enduring value of the past manifest in the creations of peoples and cultures that precede us. These creations enrich our lives. Parks Canada seeks to build for the future by helping to secure the records of human achievement.
120	Historical component (i.e. heritage) is excluded from the mandate and eco-management to strong.

Human Resources Issues	

Case Number	Comment
83	Generation X is less loyal than the baby boom generation to employers. Parks had better become competitive with its HR policies or it will not attract or retain young staff. The agency is oriented towards its aging staff and really has not vision for the future. I am leaving for the organization for thesis reasons.
48	I strongly feel that Parks Canada needs to pay its employees a 'living wage', in particular, its front-line workers who present the 'face' of Parks Canada to the public. Parks Canada needs to take 'succession-planning' more seriously or there won't be any conservators left to preserve artifacts (which is an integral part of its mandate). We are dealing with issues of a declining workforce (aging population and smaller families). It could be difficult to attract high caliber people to the Agency if the issue of compensation isn't given its due consideration.

40	This organization needs to be marketed big-time. This is the best equipped lab in the world with no one to fill it.
67	Working for approximately 20 years and no chance of career advancements in my field. Have been working well about what is expected of my position, but essentially there is no money to allow me to advance.
188	I usually tell people that I love what I do for a living, I just hate my job. Parks is squandering its human resources.
75	Although I may strongly agree with this organization's policy regarding employees, it does not mean I believe they follow through with the policy or with their own directives.
78	Unfortunately, to get ahead I would have to change into a different department and move to a different park, Service Centre, or National Office. I love living in the rural community where I am and so does my partner. Therefore I am not willing to move to get a new job.
148	There is little opportunity for fulltime indeterminate employment, and I don't know how long I can wait for the opportunity to compete.
149	The working conditions and benefits have deteriorated over the past years and the existing collective bargaining agreement seems to indicate that our human resources are going back to the dark ages.
149	If I was younger and not so committed to Parks I would seriously look at finding employment elsewhere.
156	I am very committed to the organization but often find it frustrating because personal growth not always considered important.
156	The work environment is better when managers are involved in professional development of each employee.
1	We seem to hire incompetent people more because that's all we can afford.
92	I seriously doubt that management understands just how many employees are considering leaving this organization.
92	Employees are treated like [dirt] (just like the mandate is).

105	On paper we have great HR values and principles but there are a great number of managers (not all) who do not live by these.
105	We are going towards our 4th year as an agency and the HR regime suck bigtime. As an Agency the HR regime was supposed to be simplified but people in that shop are no longer advanced than they were at the start.
166	One of the main reasons for becoming an Agency was to keep our specialized people. How do they expect to keep employees if they cannot maintain the same levels of pay and benefits as the rest of the public service. When vacancies occur they do not staff them so they can save money, and the work is then distributed to the remaining employees. They will continue to loose good qualified employees if this continues (especially the younger ones). Some employees are in their last 5-10 years before retirement and will not go anywhere else but what happens when they all retire?
171	Succession planning is a farce at the service centre level. No one has been hired or is mentoring. Morale among my colleagues is very low and continues to slide.
61	Regrettably, the Human Resource Framework [values and principles] which are entrenched in our HR management has demonstrated little regard for those 'open and transparent' practices. Little is done to conduct a succession plan, mentoring program, and continuous learning.

Organizational Change Issues

Case Number	Comment
53	I have found in the last years that when change happens that management has already looked after themselves and then the change is revealed to the employees
99	I strongly believe the Agency design was one of the biggest mistakes the federal government has made. Because of the changes I no longer feel like Parks Canada cares about me or my co-workers.
159	Moving to the OSC appears to have been a mistake. There is less support for participation in national and international projects and organizations and the role of national coordinator within Parks did not move to OSC. It is difficult to determine whether deterioration in Parks support of employee activities is a result of moving to the agency or becoming part of OSC.
59	We have been reorganized into an office that has a provincial mandate, however, we are still tied to a national mandate. How do we function effectively as one if we don't share the same purpose?

72	I am very dedicated to may work and I love my job, but when Parks Canada became an Agency I lost a lot of faith in the organization. Before we became an Agency, Conservation Services was part of National Headquarters, but once the Agency came along we were place with the Ontario Service Centre. I feel this was a real injustice, even though we still have our national mandate we have lost our voice and pride within the organization. We have never fit in with the OSC and unfortunately I don't think we ever will.
72	Parks Canada use to be a wonderful organization which inspired loyalty and devotion. It is now, sadly due to all this change, a bankrupt organization, unable to honour its values and commitments.
188	Parks management has spent the last fifteen years reorganizing itself again and again – a very expensive exercise in self justification by bureaucrats. The increasing corporatization of Parks has essentially destroyed any sense of community of purpose. Everyone is sick of hearing that there is no money for anything, when there's plenty of money at national office for rewarding executives, reinventing the wheel and creating or reclassifying positions for 'knowledge workers' as if no-one outside of Hull has any knowledge.
77	I have seen this organization go from a great place to work to a place where very few are happy with the organization. All of the changes that have taken place have resulted in too many cuts at the bottom of the pyramid.
78	Since April 1997, our park has been in a state of organizational change that continues to this day. This makes the work environment chaotic. I don't even know what work I will be doing in 4 months time from now. I am open to change and have been, I think, very adaptable and flexible as my work duties have changed considerably over the years.
153	I feel like it is a good organization to work for, with changes in today's economy and cutbacks you must be willing to adapt to change and new procedures to be happy with your job.
31	Many of the new values espoused by the agency are alien to those of use who work on the front line.
31	The human element that existed when I began here before the changes took place has disappeared, and the staff have now become just another commodity.

84   Parks Canada is an Agency adrift. The agency has failed miserably, it has not met the expectations that were established. Staff feel betrayed, morale is so low it cannot go any further. All this for the sake of "the Agency".

91   Since the organizational changes of last 5 or 6 years I more work for myself than the organization to ensure my long term security.

93   I used to be very proud of who I worked for and I was very dedicated to Parks. Changes for the worse began when we became part of Canadian Heritage. I became disheartened when I saw where money was being wasted.

97   We've went through a lot of changes but our mandate is still the same. Unfortunately, we don't have the funds to accomplish everything we want to do. When we became Canadian Heritage many felt we lost our identity in the shuffle, what we were all about and then with staff cuts morale was at an all time low. Now that we are an Agency and contract negotiations not going wee people are very frustrated. The last thing we need is a strike. Hopefully the Union and Treasury Board can come to a settlement before too much damage is done.

100   The organization has fluctuated over a 30 year period. The current situation makes it difficult for a lot of staff to make strong commitments to the style and content of the 'Agency'.

107   The concept of the Parks Canada Agency is a complete and utter failure. The current organizational structure is a recipe for failure.

109   In retrospect, Parks Canada would have been much better off if we had stayed within Canadian Heritage.

164   When we became an Agency, we were told that things would be better and that we would have the tools that we needed to do our jobs and carry out our mandate. Almost 3 years have gone by and we most certainly are not better off. If anything things are worse. The song remains the same: no money to do anything, hire staff, finish rational issues. And now with people in this organization working their buns off to keep this organization afloat, we're told via the collective bargaining process that we do not deserve the same pay as other civil servants. Is it any wonder that moral in Parks Canada is at an all time low?

177   Since we became an Agency, the fairness and the communication between the employee and the managers has drastically declined.

180	There have been positive changes in the structure of Parks Canada since the mid 1990's; downsizing helped improve efficiencies remarkably well. Overall, the change was positive.
144	Agency's wrong design – The Parks Canada Agency, and especially the Ontario Service Centre, was ill-designed in the first place. Our present structure is unnecessarily complicated and makes it very difficult to actually do the work and deliver the products to clients. Many requirements don't connect to the daily reality of work (the yearly "service delivery agreements is just one example).

Perceptions of Senior Management Issues

Case Number | Comment

41	I find that recent Agency decisions at the top have caused my commitment to plummet. There is little support/understanding for the front-line work.
188	There is a very clear match between my professional purpose and the mandate of the organization. I should be ecstatic, but I despair. Parks is not fulfilling its mandate and management refuses to acknowledge what a betrayal this represents for employees.
51	Promises were made when the agency was established concerning relationships with the employees. The agency has fallen seriously short of living up to these commitments. The suspicion is that staff were 'sold a bill of goods' in order to win staff support
51	My primary concern is the indecency of the organization to recognize the degree to which it falls short of achieving its mandate. I agree with its stated values – in practice all we get is lip-service.
91	No one at the tope seems to care about the sites themselves.
107	I have no faith in senior management to do the 'right thing' for Parks Canada, its resources and its staff. Too many times have I been let down. They love to talk the talk, but forget they then need to walk the walk.
84	While Parks Canada's mandate is laudable, the actual practice is pathetic. Senior managers seldom have the courage to stand up for what we believe in. They say they do, but I'm tired of expecting more than inaction from those who keep promising to make things better.
23	The agency structure has the potential of being great, we needed a new face. I think we're still in the process of working out the glitches.

49	In general, I must say, that the organization (senior office folk) highly undervalues it's front-line staff (although it espouses the opposite).
48	It isn't the money that keeps me here but the interesting work that I do, the loyalty I have to the mandate and the team I'm working with. We need to examine how Parks Canada is managed at the top level
40	We need someone who will stick up for us!
67	Tom Lee assured us as Parks Canada Agency employees that we would continue to have the same benefits and salaries as treasury board employees. This turns out to be false. We are not being offered the same salary increase as treasury board employees and they are trying to change some of our collective agreement, of course not to our benefit. Parks Canada does not have the money, but why does the Executive employees (with much higher salaries than ours) get a salary increase of 8.7%?
68	My loyalty is personal. My dedication is to the parks and sites not to the Parks Canada administrative organization.
119	I feel that myself and the other employees in the Parks Canada Agency have been betrayed by the CEO (Mr. Tom Lee) and the upper management. Mr. Lee promised the staff that we would be treated equally and have the same benefits as the other federal employees working for Treasury Board. And obviously, this is not the case. If we cannot have the support and feel that we are respected and needed in the organization, it is difficult to accept the fact that the upper management gave themselves a 9% increased (retroactive) and now, not only that they refuse to give us what Treasury Board employees received, but they dare to offer us less that what we already have now. I feel very little loyalty to this organization. It is difficult to be loyal when the CEO and upper management are not loyal to its employees.
160	I am less and less willing as the years pass to put in any extra effort when I regularly see how little management is willing to give employees in the way of support, encouragement, and rewards. The weight of the bureaucracy is overwhelming sometimes. I get next to no recognition or respect for what I do from any member of management.
160	This organization actively discourages the best in me and others. Management does not recognize or reward ability, talent and knowledge. The bureaucracy has no desire to change the status quo no matter how inspired the ideas.

187	Management's lack of respect for the expertise of its own employees is a huge problem. My colleagues joke about how management's eyes glaze over when they tray to talk about the work they do.
78	In general, I agree with the mandate, the stated values and the vision of Parks Canada. The problem is with the bureaucracy, now dominated by our CEO and National Office. This bureaucracy inhibits us from achieving the important work that needs to be done to protect ecological health in greater park ecosystems. Therefore I have ambivalent feelings toward the organization.
118	There is a definite need for senior managers to follow through on policies and procedures.
147	I feel that Parks Canada has to take a serious look at itself and how it operates. We are being slowly destroyed through the inadequacies of the top level management (Headquarters) as well as by our antiquated structural format.
147	The people at the tope are acting on what they think is correct, without contact or discussion with staff at the field level. It is the ultimate "top/down" form of bureaucracy which, in today's world, is just not appropriate.
147	If we (as an Agency) are to move ahead and meet our mandate, upper level management are going to have to start listening to what the field staff have to say and quit being so self-serving.
149	If given this survey 3 years ago I would have answered many more questions in a more positive way. Parks used to be one of the best places to work. Despite the values and principles adopted by the Agency, I don't see much commitment to them by senior levels of management.
154	The issue that is heavily affecting my feelings about Parks Canada is the lack of support in Cabinet, lack of funding, lack of empathy of the Executive Board for the field and staff generally.
154	There is a general and strong support for Parks Canada but not for senior managers, the Minister, and some HR functions.
8	The National Office should try to work with the kind of money they throw at us.
9	Senior managers put more effort into planning that never delivers anything. Resources should be used for frontline delivery not national office bureaucrats.

11	Better management is needed.
24	Management cannot cut/slash just to save on the bottom line. We nickel and dime here while doing our very best to preserve the mandate, but then we see the National Office spend ridiculous amounts of money where it is not warranted.
31	There is a tremendous amount of disparity between the rhetoric from the top and those of us at the bottom.
81	The stated values of the Agency are similar to mine, but in practice the management doesn't adhere to these values.
84	The recent budget with no money for Parks Canada has shown how ineffective our managers are in promoting the program.
91	The organizational mandate is not being supported financially, especially for historic sites, by government of Canada and therefore our management. The executive board keeps giving money to political projects rather than distributed fairly.
92	I will preface that my comments are made under the circumstances of the current Warden Officer Safety issue and Labour Canada complaint. Parks Canada has done a lot for me in the past, however, I have lost virtually all faith and trust in our Agency's leadership. The Agency is on the back side of a very steep and slippery slope towards pure negligence in every way of achieving their mandate. The mandate which I fully believe in and support, is of no consequence to our current CEO and other politicians and bureaucrats in the Parks Canada Agency.
95	When I first started it was a great place to work. However the current management in National Office are very difficult to work for. More upper management is two-faced. Tell you one ting and do something different.
96	I believe that the management team has been disrespectful to their employees during the collective bargaining. The employer does not care about the well being of their employees, or the morale.
97	I'm trying to be optimistic as I don't believe it's any better in the private sector. I only hope that our superiors come to their senses and realize that there are a lot of dedicated employees within Parks Canada!

102   The values at the [National Historic Sites and National Parks] are quite different than those within the National Office. I believe in an inclusive approach to decision making yet there are people in National Office who honestly believe that they are the 'decision makers' and we are here to implement their decisions. More value needs to be given to site staff and management. We could improve our '2-way communication'.

104   I blame all the change on Senior Management who seems to care only for certain people in this organization. Even though there are a lot of people who have excellent job evaluations, only certain people thrive – it's very political.

105   Transparency does not exist between the senior managers in the National Office and the rest of the country.

107   A lot of empty promises have been made. You can't help but feel cheated, since upper management seem to be taking care of themselves first. When dollars need to be cut, they always pick on the little people first, as if we don't matter. I think they should be reminded that without us the Agency would not exist.

108   The current bureaucracy is taking Parks Canada down a dark road in its history. Never have I seen a parks Canada bureaucracy that is so self-serving, so egotistical and so pig headed. They seem to be out to destroy everything positive that Parks Canada has built over the last century.

108   Things will not improve until the current executive and especially the CEO are replaced.

109   The promises made by the executive have turned out to be lies and deceptions. Senior management does not want anyone to discuss the numerous flaws in the organization's structure and there is apparently no accountability for senior management.

125   We have an inner need to work for the mandate of Parks Canada and its wonderful words. We do not usually agree with the political levels' priorities. We don't have much success negotiating through the national office's agenda's. However, we don't have any problem dealing within the park system or service centres.

125   We think the organization could do better work if it listened to the collective inner drives of its staff and less to empire building and short term political pushes.

128   Parks staff are usually a delight to work with, senior manager at the National Office come and go.

129   A word to our CEO: Review your statements, comments, press releases when you were trying to convince us that the Agency was a good thing. Are you living up to your commitments and promises? I think not.

162   Even though I question decisions made at the Ministerial level, I couldn't ask for a better work environment or atmosphere.

166   We continue opening new Parks when we cannot maintain the ones we have. The opening of new parks seems to be for Sheila Copps' agenda only. She wants the publicity associated with it.

171   Management's adherence to the mandate ebbs and flows with its fiscal outlook. Parks management is typical of public sector management – reactionary, lacking vision and self serving. I truly feel these people have lost sight of our mandate. Our sites are under funded and deteriorating, public support for parks sites is waning, the reputation Parks acquired over past decades in the field of cultural management research and conservation has long evaporated because of the actions taken by those at the top.

171   We are managed by second rate administrators with a slavish adherence to silly MBA business models that have no place I the protection, promotion and preservation of national parks and historic sites, while our funding and support continues to be cut and mismanaged. The exec class is enjoying a feeding frenzy of job opportunities at the top – silly job titles that no one understands let alone justify. At a time when our political leaders have a low appreciation of culture, parks management is almost suicidal in its behaviour – it is almost as if they want us to fail our mandate.

172   I think most people here feel as I do: the mandate is the real reason we came here and tend to stay here despite increasing feelings of frustration and futility. More and more the emphasis is moving away from the mandate towards the dissemination of government propaganda, and the abuse of Parks Canada and its programmes for the pursuit of Minister's political ambitions. We are wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars to these ends yet we are technically 'broke' and have been told to expect cuts to salaries and benefits when the new contracts are signed (senior management is of course excluded – these still got bonuses). While senior management is driving Parks Canada into the dirt, middle management is too cowardly to speak up.

174   We are still in the mindset where we have great policies however managers do not walk the talk. It is so frustrating!

180   I love Parks Canada but Parks Canada doesn't love me. I heard this said about another organization and I think it's applicable here. Senior management doesn't always reflect the high standards of the organization. Interests of senior management often only please the political masters – not to pursue the mandate.

184   There was a time when this organization was the best of all possible organizations to work for. There was a time when I felt tremendous pride and loyalty to the organization. But that was a time when Parks Canada was the organization, now that we are the 'Agency' all this has changed…everything but the mandate. I no long trust management. I no longer respect management. The only thing management seems to really care about is money…money and 'good optics' (even if this means stifling and ignoring the bad new reality of Parks Canada today). God help us!!!

139   I am ambivalent about the organization. I feel loyalty to the people I work with and devotion to the Parks mandate but chronic under funding is destroying a noble institution. The talk is beautiful but the actions of management do not support our mandate.

142   I care about the mandate however, I find that the bureaucracy does not allow me to do my work in the manner in which it should be done in order to be faithful to the mandate. Priorities are in the wrong place.

142   Too much money being used to talk about the future and writing reports – we need to put the money towards actions.

144   Self-serving managers and management – at the moment, many managers' main concern is managements survival, benefits and growth, at the expense of employees, clients and products.

144   Management's wrong philosophy – present upper management are largely inept at managing cultural resources. It is not exaggerated to state that this place is being managed like a grocery shop, by managers who use accounting principles that don't apply to the protection of cultural resources.

186   I am truly preoccupied wit how things are run. I hold the mandate at heart and truly believe in it and am doing a lot more than what I am asked for. Unfortunately I do not believe in our 'organization' (upper management). Too many of them are preoccupied with their own careers and are professional brown-nosers. It comes through very clearly that upper managers are very detached from the base and therefore reality.

37	Management has no loyalty to its employees – now the employees have no loyalty to management.
69	The National Office to often pays us lip service. The desire to appear to be adhering to the values while doing as little as possible and white-washing information coming down to employees, therefore losing all credibility.
113	Management has a power agenda – which to me is self-serving and anti-productive.
135	I do not have any respect for or commitment to an 'agency' which does not value the contributions of the employees. As soon as I can obtain alternative employment I will leave the Agency and chalk up the 17 years that I have invested as a bad experience!
93	Staff are being degraded and the cause exists at the top.

Policy Issues

Case Number	Comment
69	There has been a very poor implementation and enforcement of the French language policy which has affected my ability and desire to work within this organization.
159	Very poor implementation for French and enforcement of language policy within the OSC. Policy = good; reality = poor.

Job-specific Issues

Case Number	Comment
159	Very rewarding conservation work because of the quality of the Parks Collection.
41	I look regularly for jobs in my profession outside of Parks Canada these days. Wish there were more! I don't expect to stick with Parks Canada unless I have no other options in the upcoming years.
45	I happen to work at a great location with great people, which is making all the difference in my job right now. I won't say the same for the organization as a whole
75	I love contributing to a cause I profoundly believe in every day.

3   You don't have to shine very bright to be a star in this organization

51   I love what I do and I get excellent feedback from the people I work with, but it's frustrating to constantly feel undervalued within an organization I work so hard for.

50   Due to the routine of may position here – a great deal of these questions are difficult to answer.

49   I find that my commitment to my job is closely link to what is expected of me from my manager, peers, co-workers and sub-ordinates. Very little of my commitment is related to the grander Parks Canada agenda however, my work feeds into the success of that

68   I like Parks Canada and have never looked for other work in 30 years. I like the Parks people and I am proud to be associated with them.

118   There is more of a need to get employees to take the [onus] upon themselves and not wait for things to be 'handed to them'.

146   I believe most employees would rate questions different if organization was replaced with worksite. Most do not look out of their own box and may have a different internal view rather than the broad external. They feel their job is important, and they may alter changes at a site level but feel lost at a higher level viewpoint.

154   There is always more pressure to perform with less but Nationally new initiatives are always unfolding.

47   My commitment to this organization is in part shaped by Parks Canada's commitment to its employees. So long as I feel there are opportunities for me and my job, which I love, is recognized and rewarded, my loyalty will remain strong.

89   Given that I am eligibly for a full time pension now, yet I still fundamentally enjoy the work I do, and find it meaningful work which has enough challenge and flexibility to satisfy creative energies etc…the issue of factors which may cause me to leave is quite speculative – it may or may not 'trigger' a decision to leave; whether to 'retire' or pursue other career challenges – the option is open to me.

94   I love my job but I feel as though it and what it stands for are constantly in jeopardy when the almighty dollar is more important that the people.

97   I've worked for Parks Canada for 22 years and I have really enjoyed my job most of the time.

102	I love the organization however we are currently so overworked and have tremendous deadlines and pressures. The organization cannot accommodate our needs with bodies because of lack of dollars. If it got any worse, I don't think I could keep up the pace. Therefore, if the situation changes for the worse, I would have to leave.
102	I love Parks Canada but the future in terms of it becoming easier to manage workload is not an optimistic one. I'd be curious to experience what other departments and Agencies are experiencing.
101	I care about the organization, its mandate and my personal job performance. However, expectations and workload are extremely high, yet resources are extremely low. We're expected to do more for less – all the time. Demands are extremely difficult to keep up with.
102	I personally would like to have a long career with Parks Canada and do enjoy the work I do. However the workload is not easy to balance and my health and personal life will not be sacrificed. I am willing to (and have on many occasions) put in additional hours to ensure the best work is produced. However the organizational lack of resources, time invested in proper training and increases in expectations will only lead to unhappy, exhausted employees.
104	There was a time in this organization when I felt complete loyalty to and would have worked for almost nothing just to see this organization improve and grow stronger.
125	In a sense we are working for ourselves, our inner motivation and have just found the best, but not perfect fit, in an organization which will tolerate us.
128	I love my job because I contribute to a mandate that I believe in. It is the mandate to protect and present that keeps me happy and prevents me from leaving.
164	I love my job but I'm fed up with everything and if the right opportunity came along I would reluctantly take it because, from what I see, the future is not so bright.
165	Sometime you just have to make the best of a situation. There are some outstanding people who are really committed to the organization, and bravo to them. Then there are others who should expend as much energy to their jobs as they do to their whining.

174	My job itself is exactly what I want to do but money is causing so many valuable projects to be shelved.
177	For quite some time now, I have been told, not asked, to back up two departments plus my own position. I do not have a back up. I'm forever having large volumes of work from my own position. I used to love to come into work, but now I find the people are not what's important anymore.
114	My commitment to my job remains incredibly strong. Low commitment to management.
69	In general I love working with Parks. The people are wonderful as colleagues. I support the values and principles.

Survey Issues

Case Number	Comment
160	I assume you received a list of job categories from someone in Cornwall. The fact that "Conservator" and "Collections Management" were not included as categories is a good indication of our status within the OSC and, I believe, to some degree the Agency. In the OSC, conservators and collections management employees make up approximately half of the employee population [within the OSC]. Alone, the conservators are a much larger group than many of the job categories listed. Conservation is carried out exclusively in Ottawa and most of the Collections staff are also located in Ottawa. There is a strong feeling – and the list on your survey does bear the feelings out – that we are not within the consciousness of the Cornwall staff and are often left out, ignored, written off and under funded compared to Cornwall units.
142	It would have been useful to directly measure how all this change has affected our commitment.
95	Why are we not surveying the whole country about these issues? They are are incredibly important…Oh, I know why…it's because they [senior managers] know full well the response they would get: "we are not happy".
176	No way to indicate change in experience over time given the survey format.

136   Your definition of 'organization' needs clarification. Many staff distinguish between the roles we perform, the national parks to which our work is applied, and the bureaucracy of our government agency. Depending on what I think of when I read the term 'organization', my answer for certain questions will differ.

119   Why didn't this survey get distributed to other locations?

Epilogue

Conducting my Master's thesis within the Parks Canada Agency was an extremely educational and rewarding experience. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the wonderful people who comprised the sample that was investigated in this study and I learned a lot through the challenges I faced while trying to complete a research project that was meaningful and stimulating. At times there was uncertainty about whether a thesis of this nature could be produced at all within the Agency considering the internal issues that were taking place at the time of survey distribution (i.e. employee contract negotiations). However, there were a number of people who helped ease the uncertainty by supporting a thesis that focussed solely on organizational commitment. I am pleased that the outcome of this research will benefit many of the people that greatly helped to ensure the completion of the final report.

To conclude this experience, I would like to first thank the Parks Canada Agency for approving the topic that was investigated in this report. It is recognized that the results indicate that there are several areas of employee commitment that could be improved. I am sure that many organizations only like to hear good results from research endeavours that are conducted externally. However, the point of investigating critical issues is to gain insight into the dynamics of the issue and to learn what is positively and negatively affecting the end results. I acknowledge that the Executive Board of the Parks Canada Agency did not request this research directly, but I sincerely hope that it will take the results of this study into consideration and respond to the inferences that were made.

Secondly, I feel strongly that any research effort proposed from a University or a respected organization should be permitted to take place within the Parks Canada Agency

unless it can be clearly shown that damage will or can occur to the integrity of the people, places or things the Agency vows to protect. Many aspects of the initial proposal that I developed, with advice from Parks Canada employees and the University of Waterloo, were removed by the Executive Board without explanation after data collection commenced. Protocols within the Agency clearly need to be developed for external researchers who want to conduct an internal study within Parks Canada. Such protocols did not exist when this study was being developed, which caused a lengthy and evidently misdirected proposal development and approval approach. If the Executive Board is the body within Parks Canada that provides approvals to all external research proposals, that request access to the employees within the Agency, it needs to become a written policy. Every effort was made at all levels of the Agency to gain approval for this thesis and the approval approach was directed by employees who believed they had the authority to make such decisions. Role ambiguity can be eliminated, for this particular issue, if a policy is devised that describes the approval process for research endeavours similar to this one.

If the only outcome of this research experience is a discussion that questions the content of this study, then this thesis was worthwhile. Enabling an open dialogue to develop that concentrates on how to improve commitment within the Parks Canada Agency is, I believe, the first step toward making a positive difference in the work situations of employees who devote their lives to fulfilling the mandate. Just as an employee's efforts and achievements should be recognized, so too should their concerns and frustrations. After all, the people who strive to ensure the protection and conservation of the Parks Canada mandate are the number one asset within the

organization.   Without a dedicated and committed workforce the natural, cultural and

built assets within the Agency are undoubtedly at additional risk.