

Module V

*Psychological basics of  
organizational changes  
(Identity)*

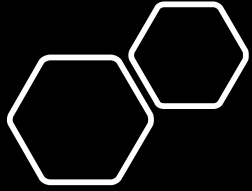
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# Learning objectives

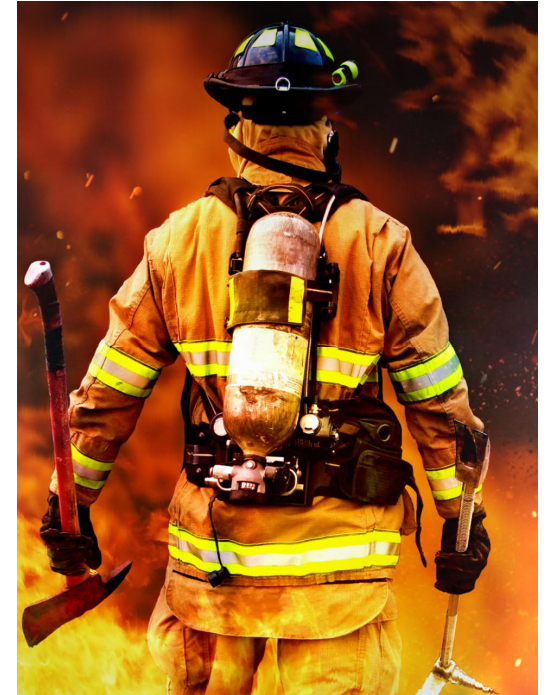
- What is identity? Organizational identity?
- Why identity is important during changes?
- How to manage identity?



# Identity and why it is important?

- Identity refers to the sense of who we are
- Organizational identity refers to the shared sense by organizational members of who they are as a group

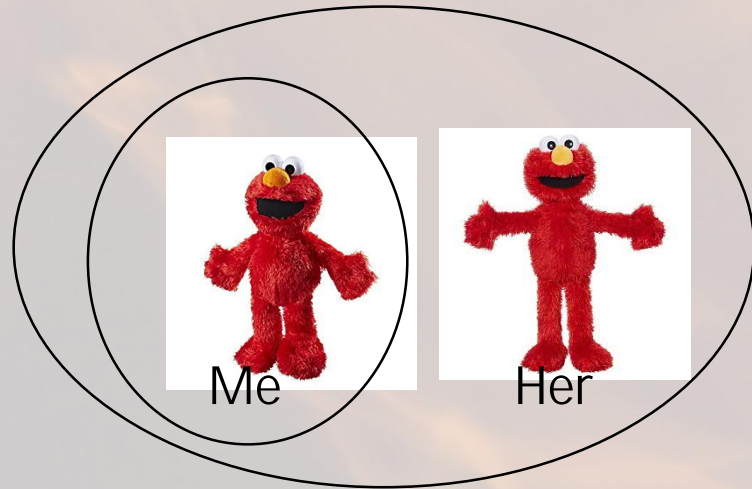
27 wildland firefighters refused to drop their heavy tools because of their **professional identity**. As a result, they could not move faster to outrun an exploding fire. This led to their death within sight of safe areas. (Weick, 1996)



Because employees of Southwest Airlines identified with the company, they volunteered for pay cuts during the fuel price crisis of 1991.



# Self-categorization theory



Us – In Group

VS.



Them – Out Group

Every individual has two fundamental but contradicting needs:

1. To belong and validate his/her worldviews
2. To be special and unique



# Identity

We all have different identities that are activated in different situations

Identity influence how we think and behave

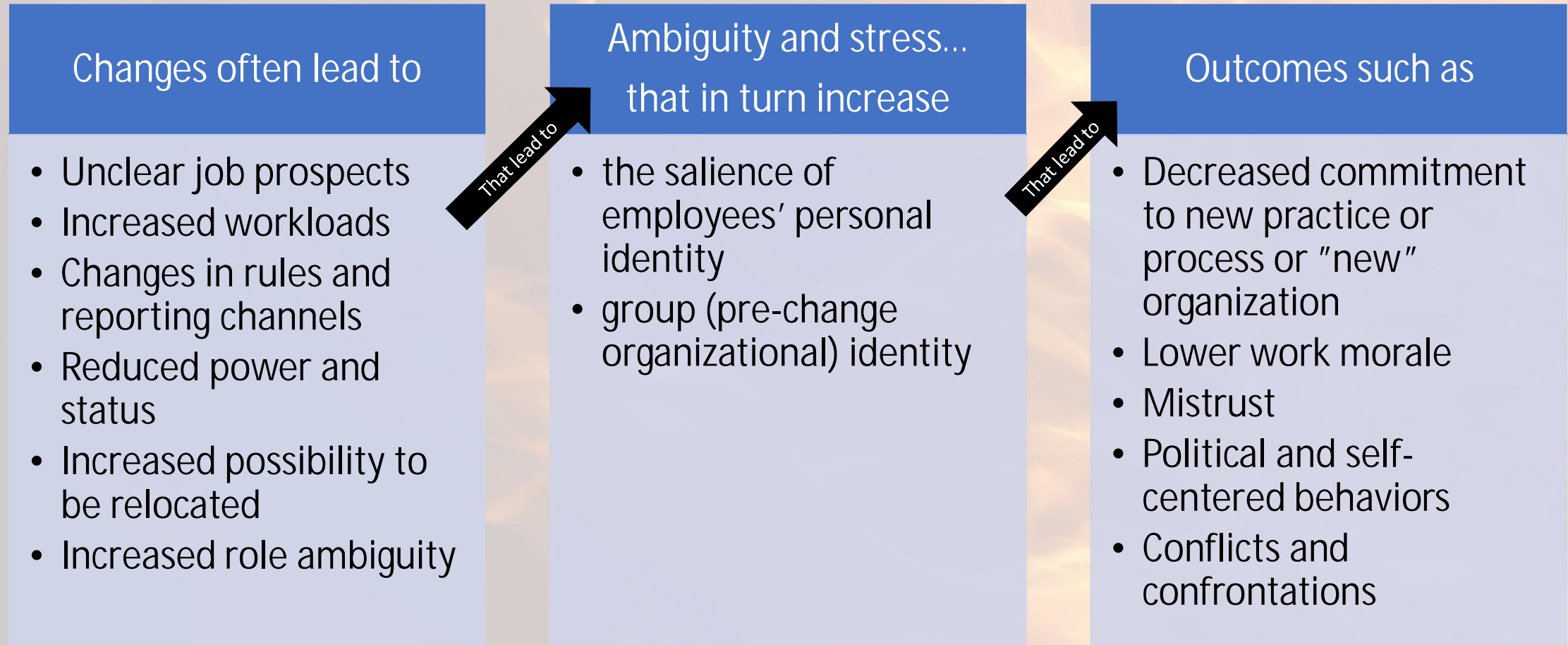


# Identify your identity

Spend 1-3 minutes to write down the end for each sentence

- I have the following roles...
  - I am the one who...
  - I am successful when...
  - I feel accomplished when...
  - I want my colleagues to see me as ...
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- Reflect of what identities you have and what are most central (important) identities for you

# Organizational changes and identities



# Organizational changes and identity



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One of the key challenges of any changes is to ensure that employees and managers identify with the “new” organization, practices, or processes

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The more “new” organization is perceived as the continuation of “pre-changed” organization, the more employees identify with it

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The stronger pre-change identification, the stronger employees fear upcoming changes

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The perceived threat can have both negative (e.g. decreased workplace commitment) but also positive (e.g. proactive and initiatives-taking behaviors) effect



# Stereotypes as biases in our judgments and behaviors



- *Stereotyping* is the process through which people come to judge other people and respond to them in terms of their particular category membership (i.e. age, gender, race, weight, location, nationality, etc.)
- *Stereotypes* are used because people's evaluations, impressions, and attitudes are shaped and guided by their knowledge and pre-existing beliefs about the social world around them
- Rather than viewing others on the basis of their unique individual characteristics, people rely on stereotypical conceptions

# Stereotyping in everyday life



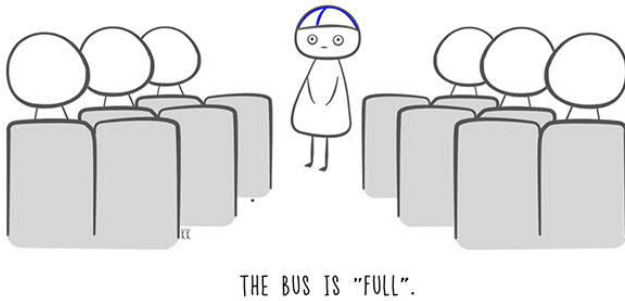
KuvatON.com

How the average American sees the World  
A Stereotype Map



## FINNISH NIGHTMARES

FINNISHNIGHTMARES.BLOGSPOT.FI - FACEBOOK.COM/FINNISHNIGHTMARES - TWITTER.COM/FINN\_MATTI



# You, as a manager, need to

(Partially based on Giessner et al., 2016)



Invest in supporting or constructing new organizational identity

- Narratives, stories
- Symbols, labels, common vision, etc.



Tackle any stereotypical tendencies in decision-making and judgments



Monitor employees' perceptions and attitudes towards each others and the change



Communicate your appreciation to the employees  
Avoid the “second class citizens” perceptions...



# Discussion (15 minutes + 15 minutes)



In group of 4 consider a real or hypothetical case of organizational changes

Discuss the following issues:

1. What would be your strategy concerning org identity of the new organization? Why?

2. What org identity-related issues are likely to emerge in your cases?

3. How would you facilitate and manage the new organization's identification?

Class discussion



# Summary

- Identity refers to the sense of who we are
- Identity influence how we think and behave
- Change can threaten organizational members' identities
- As a manager you need:
  - Invest in constructing a new organizational identity
  - Monitor employees' perceptions and attitudes towards each others and the change
  - Tackle any stereotypical tendencies in decision-making and judgments
  - Communicate your appreciation to the employees