

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY BREACH & REPAIR: FINDINGS FROM THE CRISIS IN UNICEF GERMANY

Despite a proliferation of research on organizational identity change in general, less is known about organizational identity breach. In particular, there is a paucity of knowledge of how breaches come into being and how they may then be repaired by renegotiating a shared sense of what the organization is all about. Our analysis explores a revelatory case study of identity breach and repair at UNICEF Germany 2007-2011 which had to revisit and repair its organizational identity after a widespread crisis. We elaborate on four cycles in identity breach and repair: gradual identity drift, revelation of an identity breach, reconstruction of a new identity, and enactment of the repaired identity. Our process model of identity breach and repair unravels cycle-specific identity work practices and strategies. The study contributes to research on identity change by elucidating its extreme form of identity breach as well as by outlining a corresponding process model. It also adds to research on identity repair by detailing its implementation and by demonstrating organizational crises as important occasions for organizational identity repair.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2019 | 9:30 - 11:00 AM | BUS 5-13

DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT
& ORGANIZATION VISITING SPEAKER

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— HENRY MARSHALL TORY, FOUNDING PRESIDENT, 1908

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