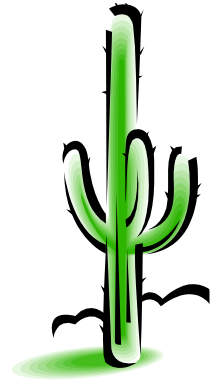


**The School of Sociology  
Colloquium**

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**“Organizational identity and resistance to environmental pressures”**

A key problem faced by organizational decision makers is uncertainty regarding the relative value of alternative courses of organizational action. Two largely isolated streams of research in sociology have emphasized different mechanisms for dealing with such uncertainty. Research in institutional theory indicates that uncertainty leads organizations to imitate others in their field. The literature on identity theory suggests that actors' group membership (i.e., organizational identity) strongly informs how they behave in the presence of uncertainty. This paper aims to synthesize these two theories by showing how organizational identity affects the degree to which organizational decision makers imitate others in their field. Three experiments not only test the relationship between organizational identity and resistance to environmental pressures but also examine status and identity type as potential contingencies. The results support the hypothesized positive link between organizational identity and resistance that becomes especially strong when status is high (rather than low) and when the organizational identity is normative (rather than utilitarian).

**January 30, 2015  
Social Sciences, Room 415  
12:00pm-1:15pm**