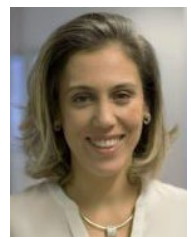




ICOR - INENT RESEARCH SEMINAR

“Organizational identity emergence as a boundary project: enabling plurality”

Cyrine BEN HAFIËDH - IÉSEG School of Management
&
Julie HERMANS – UCLouvain



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Abstract:

The enduring perspective on organizational identity has long hampered process and change studies. Formation research is even scarcer. In this paper, we analyze the emergence of a new venture’s organizational identity as a boundary project. We first distinguish the imprinting process to which entrepreneurial team members contribute with their vision and values. We then find external organizational identity work, both cognitive-based (‘distinctiveness’) and practice-based (‘othering’). These processes give rise to the boundary object, organizational identity, and we show how the members of the collective draw on their own interpretation of the inchoate and emerging identity, making it work for their own practices. Then, we observe that when one of the subgroups’ “we do” is threatened, a need to further work on its specific version of the boundary object is triggered. This in turn launches another round of organization identity work, rather internal this time on, dealing with the co-mingling multiple identities of the organization, that shows how the “we do” can not only be impacted by the “who we are” but also impacts the latter at the collective level. We term this internal organizational identity work ‘sense tacking’, as the organizational members tack back and forth between the ill-defined common part of the boundary object and the always better defined part they use in their subgroup.

Please note: Work-in-progress. The version that will be presented is different but not written-up yet. Same dataset and topic.

Keywords: *Boundary object; Boundary work; Entrepreneurship; Formation; Identity work; Organizational identity; Plurality.*

