Abstract:

Organizational and sociological theories about status and reputation emphasize the advantages that accrue to prestigious actors. In evaluative situations, actors who have high status and/or positive reputations frequently receive greater latitude and praise than their less prestigious peers. Moreover, prestigious actors find it easier to achieve advantageous outcomes due to these evaluative benefits. In this presentation, I will challenge these assumptions and identify situations in which actors with lesser status and weaker reputations are able to gain advantages over their more prestigious peers. I will present two analyses. The first examines status reproduction in Major League baseball, and the second explores the roles of status and reputation in shaping jury judgments in employment discrimination lawsuits. Based on these analyses, I discuss the boundary conditions of the Matthew Effect and identify conditions in which status and reputation impose halo taxes.