



INENT RESEARCH SEMINAR



“Extemporaneous Coordination In Specialist Teams: Evidence from Random Assignment in E-Sports”

Enrico Forti – UCL School of Management, UK

Thursday, September 26th, 2019 – 13:00 – 14:30

Abstract:

Team production is ubiquitous in the economy, but creating the right team remains a challenge for many organizations. This paper studies how familiarity amongst teammates shifts the returns to specialist teams. Applying theories of team production to contexts where team members coordinate interdependent activities extemporaneously, we develop predictions about the marginal effects of team composition and two dimensions of familiarity: social familiarity and functional familiarity. We test our hypotheses in the context of DOTA2, a major e-sports game where individuals choose their level of specialization endogenously, but are often randomly assigned to five-person teams. After analysing nearly 8.1M million matches, we find that specialist teams are relatively more successful as members become more socially and functionally familiar with one another. The results suggest that the “plug and play” perspective on specialist teams is incomplete; rather, specialization and familiarity are complements.