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14:30 - 16:00

MANAGEMENT & SOCIETY

**RESEARCH
SEMINAR**



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

‘BUILDING THE RIGHT PROJECT PORTFOLIO: CAREER CONSEQUENCES OF CONTENT AND COLLABORATION SPECIALIZATION’

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A joint work with M. Bidwell



ABSTRACT

Project-based organizations can allow employees in ostensibly similar roles to acquire very different experiences by working on different kinds of projects. We explore how those different project experiences might affect promotion rates, examining the kinds of project portfolios that are associated with more rapid advancement. Drawing on theories of human and social capital, we propose that increased diversification in both the kinds of projects that an employee works on and the collaborators that they work with are likely to lead to faster promotion. We also suggest that the effects of increased content diversity and collaborator diversity are likely to offset each other, so that the benefits of content diversity are less when employees work with a greater variety of collaborators. We test these arguments using project data from a services organization. We leverage variation in client demand as an exogenous source of variation in project portfolios to generate instruments for project variety. We find that increased diversification in content and collaborators is associated with increased promotion and that their effects do offset each other. We also find non-linearities in the effects. We find evidence that increases in content diversity have diminishing returns, while returns from collaborator diversity are highest for those who have the most collaborators.