

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, September 22, 2014

Where: 265 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:15 pm

Katie Coffman

Assistant Professor of Economics, Ohio State University

Evidence on Self-Stereotyping and the Contribution of Ideas

ABSTRACT: We use a lab experiment to explore the factors that predict an individual's decision to contribute her idea to a group. We find that contribution decisions depend upon the interaction of gender and the gender stereotype associated with the decision-making domain: conditional on measured ability, individuals are less willing to contribute ideas in areas that are stereotypically outside of their gender's domain. Importantly, these decisions are largely driven by self-assessments, rather than fear of discrimination. Individuals are less confident in gender incongruent areas and are thus less willing to contribute their ideas. Because even very knowledgeable group members under-contribute in gender incongruent categories, group performance suffers and, ex post, groups have difficulty recognizing who their most talented members are. Our results show that even in an environment where other group members show no bias, women in male-typed areas and men in female-typed areas may be less influential. An intervention that provides feedback about a woman's (man's) strength in a male-typed (female-typed) area does not significantly increase the probability that she contributes her ideas to the group. A back-of-the-envelope calculation reveals that a .lean in. style policy that increases contribution by women would significantly improve group performance in male-typed domains. Classifications: J16, C92



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