**Seminar in the Economics of Science & Engineering**

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SPEAKER:
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PRESENTATION TITLE:
Effects of Same-Race Mentorship Preferences on Academic Performance and Survival

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ABSTRACT:
Same-race mentorship preference refers to mentors or mentees forming connections influenced by a shared race. Although racial diversity in science has been well-studied and linked to favorable outcomes, the extent and effects of samerace mentorship preferences remain largely underexplored. Here, we analyze 465,355 mentor-mentee pairs from more than 60 research areas over the last 70 years to investigate the effect of same-race mentorship preferences on mentees’ academic performance and survival. Using causal inference and statistical matching, we develop a measure of same-race mentorship propensity that accounts for racial demographic variations across institutions, time periods, and research fields. Our findings reveal a pervasive same-race mentorship propensity across races, fields, and universities of varying research intensity. We observe an increase in same-race mentorship propensity over the years, further reinforced inter-generationally within a mentorship lineage. This propensity is more pronounced for non-White minorities (Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics). Our results reveal that mentees under the supervision of mentors with high same-race propensity experience significantly lower productivity, impact, knowledge diversity, and collaboration reach during and after training, ultimately leading to a 27.7% reduced likelihood of remaining in academia. In contrast, a mentorship approach devoid of racial propensity appears to offer the best prospects for academic performance and persistence. These findings underscore the importance of mentorship diversity for academic success and shed light on factors contributing to minority underrepresentation in science.

BIO:
[Meijun Liu](https://igpp.fudan.edu.cn/igppen/e7/da/c20933a255962/page.htm) is an assistant professor at Institute for Global Public Policy, Fudan University. She received her Ph.D. degree in Information Science from the University of Hong Kong. She serves as the associate editor of Quality & Quantity, the program director of LSE-Fudan Double Master’s Degree Program in Global Social Policy, and was awarded Shanghai Pujiang Talent Program Award, and was elected as chair-elect of ASIS&T SIG-STI (Special Interest Group – Scientific and Technical Information). Before joining Fudan, she was a research fellow at the Department of Economics, Harvard University, National Bureau of Economic Research and the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.
Her research areas include science of science, informetrics and S&T policy. She aims to understand whether and how scientific collaboration and mobility influence research output, team performance and regional innovation. Her research is based on big data analytics, advanced econometrics and data mining techniques. She has been leading projects supported by the National Natural Science Foundation and Science and Technology Commission of Shanghai Municipality. Meijun’s research is published in high-quality international academic journals in information science, such as JASIST, Journal of Informetrics, Journal of Information Science, PloS one and Learned Publishing. Her studies were featured on Nature and the Atlantic.

KEYWORDS:
Mentorship; same-race preferences; academic survival; research performance.