PANTHÉON-ASSAS UNIVERSITÉ PARIS

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LEMMA
Laboratoire d'économie mathématique et de microéconomie appliquée

SÉMINAIRE

PEER EFFECTS AND THE GENDER GAP IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP: EVIDENCE FROM MBA STUDENTS

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Lemma - Salle Maurice Desplas 4 rue Blaise Desgoffe 75006 PARIS

Le LEMMA organise un séminaire et accueille Ashley WONG qui présentera « ***Peer Effects and the Gender Gap in Corporate Leadership: Evidence from MBA Students*** » (avec Menaka HAMPOLE and Francesca TRUFFA).

Résumé :

Women continue to be underrepresented in corporate leadership positions. This paper studies the role of social connections in women's career advancement. We investigate whether access to a larger share of female peers in business school affects the gender gap in senior managerial positions. Merging administrative data from a top-10 U.S. business school with public LinkedIn profiles, we first document that female MBAs are 24\% less likely than male MBAs to enter senior management within 15 years of graduation. Next, we use the exogenous assignment of students into sections to show that a larger proportion of female MBA section peers increases the likelihood of entering senior management for women but not for men. This effect is driven by female-friendly firms, such as those with more generous maternity leave policies and greater work schedule flexibility. A larger proportion of female MBA peers induces women to transition to these firms where they attain senior management roles. A survey of female MBA alumnae reveals three key mechanisms: (i) information sharing, especially related to gender-specific advice, (ii) higher ambitions and self-confidence, and (iii) increasing support from male MBA peers. These findings highlight the role of social connections in reducing the gender gap in senior management positions.