

IS TWO ALWAYS BETTER THAN ONE?

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF MINORITY DUOS IN WORK GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

Research and theory on diversity in organizations has tended to consider how group dynamics are affected by proportional rather than incremental changes in group membership. In this talk I explore the dynamics in groups with minority duos (i.e., where exactly two members share a social category that is still in the minority within the group). Although conventional wisdom and some empirical evidence suggests that people think it will be better to be part of a minority duo than to be a solo in a group, in experimental studies I show that being part of a minority duo can present challenges for the members of the duo. One study demonstrated that men evaluated a woman more stereotypically when there were two women in the group than when there were one or three. Another study showed that men rated a woman in their group as contributing less leadership and having fewer skills when there were two women in the group than when there were one or three. I discuss the implications of these effects for managing diverse teams.