Glorification of ignorance

When we examine cases of leadership in the global scene, we identify two polarised paths to leadership: one path is via merit, competence and high performance. In this first path, diversity finds valuebecause talent is diverse and those who are talented are prized candidates for leadership positions. Yet, there is also another path to leadership that has started becoming rather common place, ie. leadership that is built upon glorification of ignorance. We note that diversity sits rather uncomfortably in this second path as ignorance allows wide space for fear and loathing of difference, nostalgia for times which were less enlightened and in which specific groups enjoyed privilege while others suffered systemic discrimination, and treatment of difference as a threat rather than as a value. In this workshop, Michàlle Mor Barak and Mustafa Özbilgin would like to seek answers to the following questions about the glorification of ignorance in leadership and its consequences for diversity and inclusion:

1. What are the conditions that legitimise ignorance as a means for leadership selection?  How is it manifested around the world?

2. Why is ignorance glorified as a leadership quality today and what theories might explain this phenomenon?

3. What are the mechanisms by which ignorance in leadership affects institutions, systems and structures of equality and inclusion?

4. Is resistance futile? What are the methods by which ignorance can be resisted?

5.  What scientific inquiry agenda might help us understand the glorification of ignorance phenomenon, its antecedents, and its consequences?  In particular, what are the implications for leadership in the context of diversity and inclusion?

Workshop Organisers

Michàlle Mor Barak, Ph.D.

Dean’s Professor of Social Work & Business

Chair, Department of Community, Organization and Business Innovation (COBI)

USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and

USC Marshall School of Business  
University of Southern California

[Los Angeles, CA 90089-0411](x-apple-data-detectors://2/0)

[http://sowkweb.usc.edu/faculty/michalle-mor-barak](http://sowkweb.usc.edu/faculty/michalle-mor-barak" \t "_blank)

Phone: [+1 213-740-2002](tel:%2B1%20213-740-2002" \t "_blank)

Fax: [+1 213-740-0789](tel:%2B1%20213-740-0789" \t "_blank)