**Panel on Resistance and Backlash**

Chair: Joana Vassilopoulou

In this panel, 4 D&I scholars will make a short presentation on how resistance and backlash manifest in the workplace, organizations, and society. Diversity champions attract backlash when they advocate for the fair treatment and the rights of minority groups. In the US, dominant group members who feel threatened will seek to establish their privilege and dominance when minority groups assert their rights. Individuals, particularly those with multiple stigmatized identities, experience adversity and resistance in the workplace when they attempt to advance their careers. An influx of refugees and migrants also attract backlash affecting how EDI scholars navigate these challenges. The panel will be interactive and invite audience participation and dialogue with the panel members.

Kecia Thomas

Resistance to diversity can take multiple forms and occur across levels in organizations (Thomas, 2008). Likewise, the persistence of diversity has significant negative outcomes for institutions; both financial and in regards to productivity.  Those responsible for the work of being diversity champions may face overt hostility from those wishing to maintain the status quo as well as cynicism and skepticism from likely partners and allies who desire to see diversity change more quickly and dramatically.  What are the personal and professional implications for diversity practitioners who find themselves in the middle of these pressures?  The proposed panel provides an opportunity to discuss the personal and career consequences of being a diversity champion, especially in times of turbulence.  Continued opportunities to support diversity and inclusion must attend to the needs of practitioners doing this work in order to build institutional D&I knowledge and grow effective strategies across generations.

Eddy Ng

As racial minorities assert their rights in the workplace and society, some White workers are beginning to perceive this as discrimination and a threat to their privilege and identity.  Based on a survey of working professionals, there is evidence that Whites experience more negative psychological effects (i.e., lower job satisfaction and higher work stress) from perceived discrimination than minority employees and are more likely to act to restore conditions of privilege by leaving their current job and employer.  Minorities were less likely to switch employers, possibly due to internalized perceptions of racism and a belief that they will receive similar treatment regardless of the organization they work for. The stronger negative effects of perceived discrimination for Whites (vs. minorities) were restricted to work outcomes (job satisfaction, work stress, turnover intentions from one’s employer) and were not evident with respect to perceptions of overall well-being (i.e., life satisfaction), suggesting that White fragility may play a particularly influential role in work settings.

Mustafa Ozbilgin

This talk explores two meanings of resistance: resistance to equality and resistance for social progress.  Backlash against LGBTI+ is framed as resistance to equality and LGBTI+ coping and resilience is framed as resistance against backlash.

This paper examines how LGBTI+ individuals cope within an adverse context. Focusing on a study of strategies of coping and resilience among 10 Turkish LGBTI+ individual, the study indicates the interplay between choices and chances of LGBTI individuals in negotiating their career and life plans. Adversity in the macro context is combatted and resisted at meso and micro level interactions. The study reveals the significance of resilience in the context of adversarial treatment of LGBTI+ issues.

Lena Knappert

The international community is currently witnessing “the highest levels of displacement on record” (UNHCR, 2018), which challenges EDI researchers and policy-makers to study and facilitate migrants’ equality and inclusion in their host countries’ labour markets and workplaces. Yet, in the wake of the 2016 ‘refugee crisis’, rising nationalism and right-wing populism, political and societal resistance towards immigration and migrants’ workplace inclusion is growing in many countries. I want to speak about how this growing resistance and backlash affects our work as EDI researchers and we can deal with it. By involving the audience’s experiences from different countries, I would like to develop a comparative perspective on these questions. As one country example, I will introduce the findings of a survey with more than 11000 citizens and 900 politicians in The Netherlands, which showed how political ideology and stereotypes towards refugees shape people’s attitudes towards immigration and integration. Personal knowing refugees can mitigate these effects by political ideology, but only for citizens and not for politicians, which is a particularly important finding in light of their power in policy decision-making.