Professor Elizabeth George, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology

Abstract: We develop a theoretical framework to explain why individuals respond differently to dissimilarity from their coworkers. We draw on regulatory focus theory to explore how chronic regulatory motivations cause individuals to view dissimilarity in terms of potential gains or losses. We use this basic argument to explain why previous research has found mixed results on predictions that high status individuals respond negatively to dissimilarity and low status individuals respond positively to dissimilarity. We also use regulatory focus theory to predict individuals’ cognitive and affective responses to dissimilarity, and consequently to organizationally relevant outcomes like relationships with coworkers, altruism, conflict in workgroups and withdrawal from the workgroup. Finally we use regulatory focus theory to explore how situational features like the diversity climate of the organization and whether the focal individual is a token in the workgroup trigger different regulatory motivations in some individuals and thus shape their responses to dissimilarity. Taken together our motivational model of relational demography provides an overarching framework for understanding how attributes of the individual and the situation predict how they will respond.

Presenter: Elizabeth George is Professor of Management at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. She has held academic positions at the Australian Graduate School of Management, University of Queensland and Western Michigan University as well as visiting positions in Duke University and the Indian School of Business. She received her PhD in Organization Science from the University of Texas at Austin.

Professor George’s research interests include nonstandard work arrangements and diversity. Her work has been published in journals such as Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Applied Psychology, Organization Science and the Academy of Management Annals. She is a currently a member of the editorial boards of Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Organizational Behavior and the Australian Journal of Management. She is currently an associate editor for the Academy of Management Annals and Organizational Psychology Review, and was senior editor for Organization Studies (2008-2013), and area editor for the Australian Journal of Management (2008-2011). Her research has been recognized with various awards including the Academy of Management Review Best Paper Award (2007), She was Division Chair of the Academy of Management’s Managerial and Organizational Cognition Division till August 2015.

Date: Tuesday 29 September 2015
Time: 3:00 — 4:00 pm
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