

# Organizational leadership: Key to DEI success?

*Stakeholder event*

Program





*Stakeholder event Organizational leadership: Key to DEI success?*

This stakeholder event is a co-production of the Interuniversity Network on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the teams behind [the NWO project Beyond Boardrooms](#) and [the Goldschmeding Foundation project Het Moet wel werken. Impact maken op de D&I praktijk](#)

Date: Friday, May 16th, 2025

Time: 13:00 – 18:00

Venue: Utrecht University Academy Hall (wheelchair accessible)

For more information about the network, please visit our website:  
<https://www.uu.nl/en/organisation/interuniversity-network-on-diversity-equity-inclusion>

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# Organizational leadership: Key to DEI success?

*Stakeholder event*

This new edition of our successful series of stakeholder meetings explores the crucial role of organizational leadership in driving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) success. The event showcases our network members' research on leadership diversity (demographics, experience, leadership styles, etc.), the role of policy in promoting diversity within leadership, and the impact of leadership on the implementation and effectiveness of DEI policies. The event brings together researchers, policymakers, and industry professionals for meaningful discussions and collaborations.





## Program

13:00 - 14:00	Walk-in, registration and poster pitches (Room 1636) <i>Coffee and tea</i>
14:00 - 15:15	Opening and research talks (Aula)
15:15 - 16:00	Meet the experts (Room 1636) <i>Coffee and tea</i>
16:00 - 16:45	Research talks (Aula)
16:45 - 17:30	Panel session (Aula)
17:30 - 18:30	<i>Drinks and bites</i> (Room 1636)

## Poster pitches

13:00 - 14:00

- 1 Unleashing leader identity: How minorities can forge their path to leadership? *Mingyan Tong (Université libre de Bruxelles)*
- 2 Broader implications of corporate boardroom quotas: examining the impact of the Dutch quota on the gender wage gap in organizations *Sören Tumeltshammer (University of Groningen)*
- 3 Gender diversity is time: Temporal dimensions of diversity and their impact on Dutch firm financial performance *Georgios Michelakis (University of Groningen)*
- 4 Intermediaries of inclusion? Recruiters' use of anonymized CVs and automation in multi-step hiring *Huyen Nguyen (Utrecht University)*

## Research talks

14:00 - 15:15

- 1 Inclusive leadership, does it really help disadvantaged employees? *Claudia Toma (Université libre de Bruxelles)*
- 2 It's all in the frame: Framing diversity policies to reduce attitudinal resistance towards gender quota and their beneficiaries *Jill Knapen (Open University)*
- 3 Unravelling inclusive leadership in organizations: Foundations, antecedents, and outcomes *Tanachia Ashikali (Leiden University)*

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## Meet the experts

15:15 - 16:00

- 1 Empowering DEI through artificial intelligence *Shuai Yuan (University of Amsterdam)*
- 2 Gender quotas and leadership: Navigating support and resistance *Christoph Janietz (University of Groningen)*
- 3 Intersectionality in DEI policies: Why is it important, and how to do it? *Lieselotte Blommaert (Radboud University) and Marieke van den Brink (Radboud University)*
- 4 Attracting talent through competency-oriented recruitment *Karima el Bouchtaoui (Founder Ocellus)*

## Research talks

16:00 - 16:45

- 4 Talking the talk and walking the talk: Managerial support for D&I policies and workplace inclusion *Yonn Bokern (Utrecht University)*
- 5 Taking stock of diversity in Dutch company leadership *Zoltán Lippényi (University of Groningen)*



## *Panel session*

16:45 - 17:30

### ***DEI Backlash – The Role of Leadership***

**Moderator:** *Jojanneke van der Toorn*

**Panelists:**

- *Naomi Ellemers (Utrecht University)*
- *Natalie Holwerda-Mieras (Nobbe Mieras Trainings)*
- *Ayfer Veli Korkmaz (Allianz)*
- *TBC*

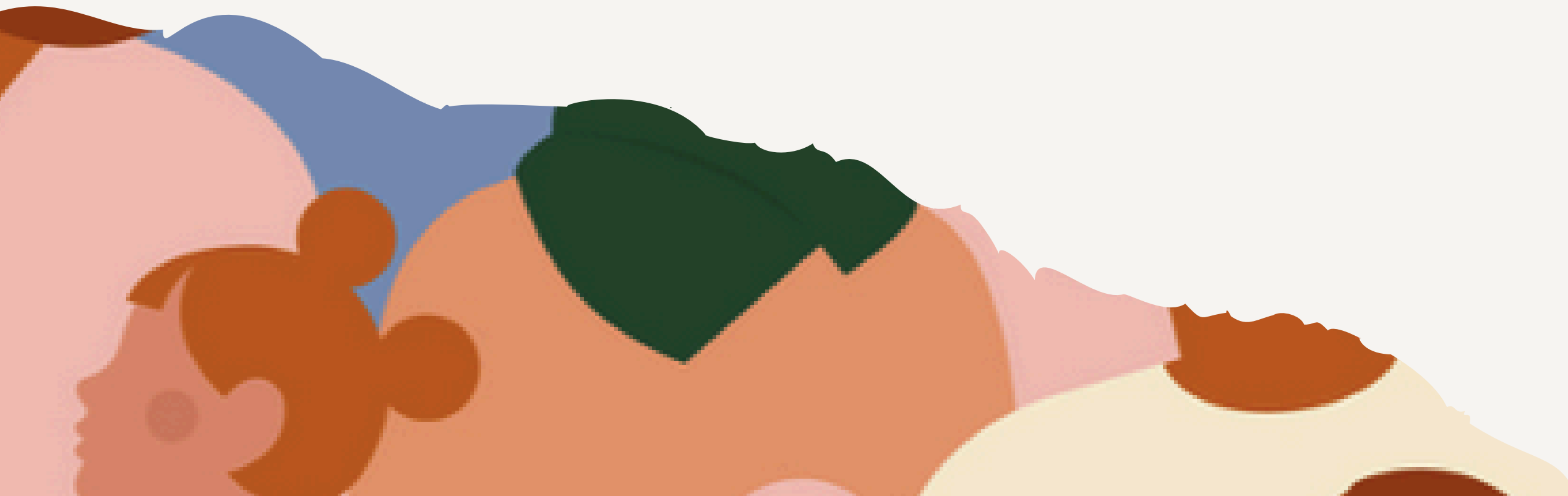
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Poster pitch 1



**Mingyan Tong**

PhD Candidate in Leadership and Diversity  
at Université libre de Bruxelles



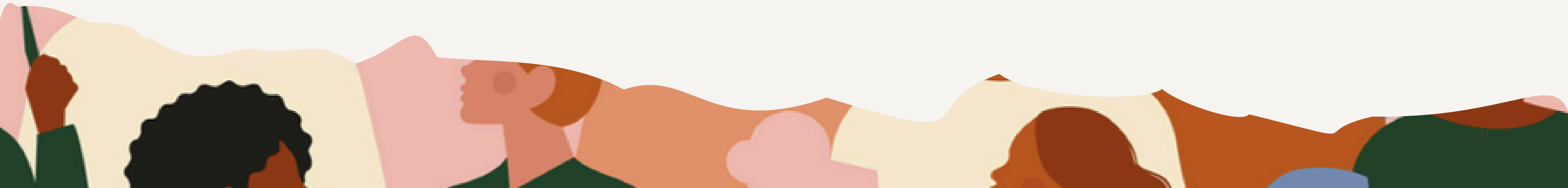


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## Unleashing leader identity: How minorities can forge their path to leadership?

*Mingyan Tong (Université libre de Bruxelles), Claudia Toma (Université libre de Bruxelles), and Smaranda Boros (Vlerick Business School)*

My research explores the intersection of leadership, diversity, and inclusion, investigates how social identity processes influence leadership emergence, with a focus on minority individuals navigating organizational structures. My current research question, “Unleashing Leader Identity: How Minorities Can Forge Their Path to Leadership?”, using survey-based experiment design, examines how leader identity and implicit leadership theories (ILTs) shape the emergence and perception of minority leaders. This research advances ILTs by highlighting the role of leader identity in leadership perceptions and contributes to the understanding of systemic barriers that minorities face. It offers practical insights into how minority leaders can navigate biases and gain support in leadership selection processes. By examining these dynamics, the study provides actionable strategies to foster more equitable and inclusive leadership opportunities.



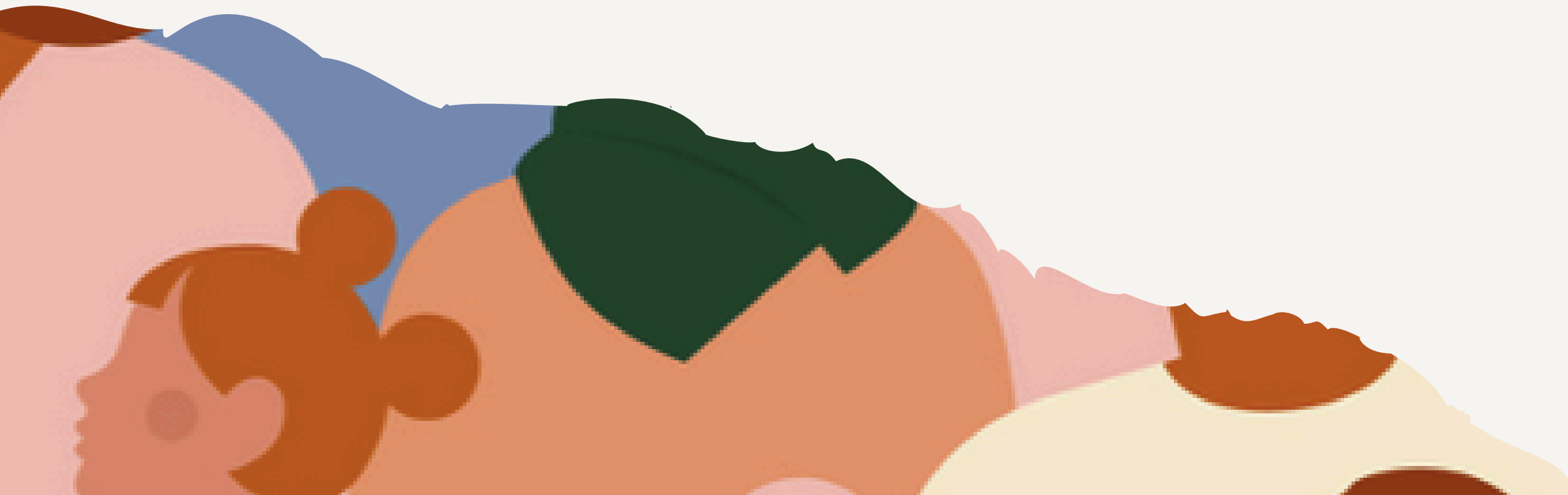
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Poster pitch 2



**Sören Tumeltshammer**

PhD Candidate in Sociology at University of Groningen

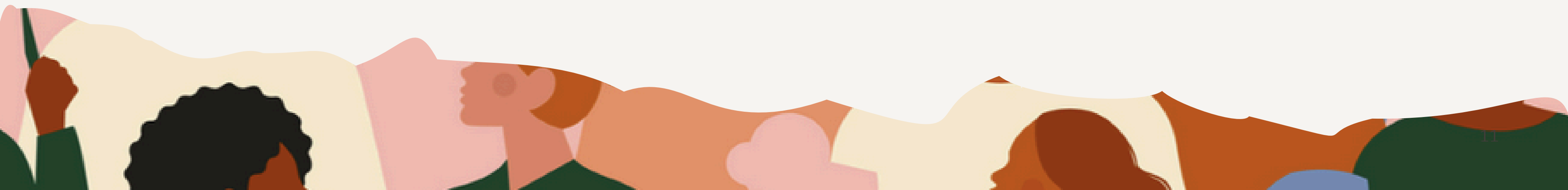


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## Broader implications of corporate boardroom quotas: examining the impact of the Dutch quota on the gender wage gap in organizations

*Sören Tumeltshammer (University of Groningen), Zoltán Lippényi (University of Groningen), and Christoph Janietz (University of Groningen)*

Our paper investigates the broader impacts of corporate boardroom quotas on gender equality within organizations, focusing on the gender wage gap. Examining the Dutch target law – a weakly enforced yet wide-reaching quota policy – we analyze whether such policies influence gender wage disparities and female representation across organizational levels. Using linked employer-employee register data and employing regression discontinuity and difference-in-differences designs, we find evidence that the Dutch quota reduced the gender wage gap in targeted firms. Over nine years post-implementation, the gap narrowed by €0.60 more in quota-targeted firms, compared to non-targeted firms. Furthermore, quotas increased women’s representation in higher organizational echelons, with evidence suggesting a gradual shift towards greater gender parity in top income quartiles.



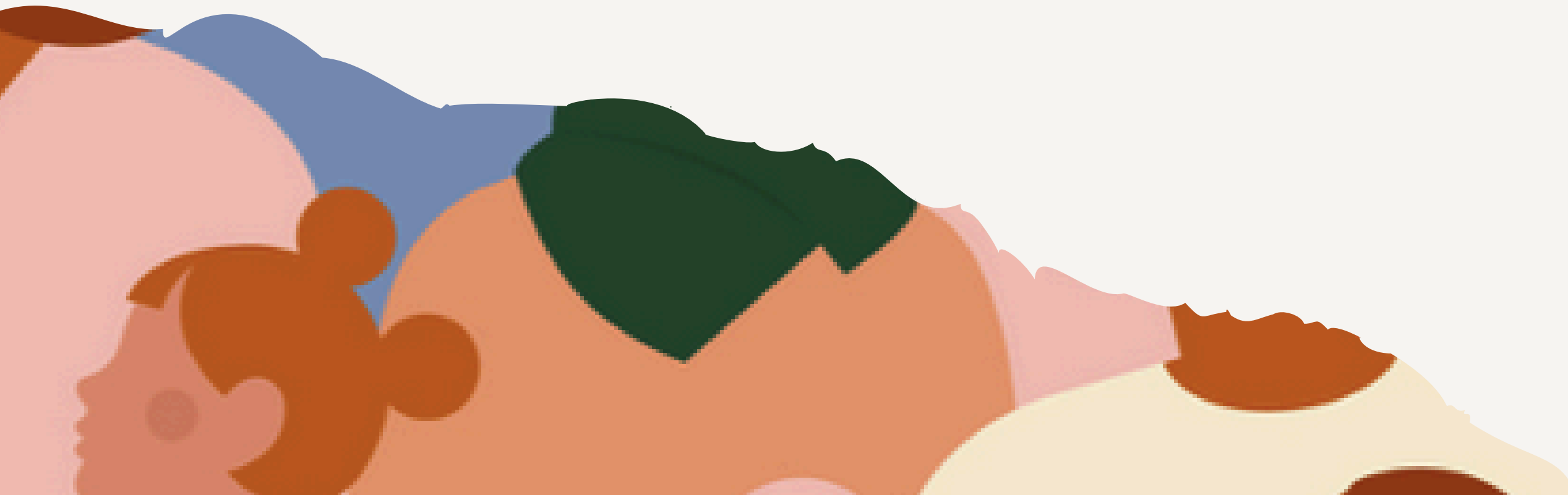
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Poster pitch 3



**Georgios Michelakis**

PhD Candidate in Sociology at University of Groningen



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## Gender diversity is time: Temporal dimensions of diversity and their impact on Dutch firm financial performance

*Georgios Michelakis (University of Groningen), Zoltán Lippényi (University of Groningen), Naomi Ellemers (Utrecht University), and Rafael Wittek (University of Groningen)*

Research on the benefits of board gender diversity has focused on the superior decision-making of heterogeneous groups and the signal that diversity sends towards stakeholders. However, what is yet less clear is whether board gender diversity leads to improved firm financial performance, particularly during times of exogenous crisis. This is why we recreated the historical composition of 80 Dutch (formerly-) listed firms, that we later analyzed using panel data fixed effects, employing lagged variables. Based on the signaling theory, we hypothesized that early adopters of boardroom diversity are more likely to receive stakeholder support in times of crisis as a reward for their innovativeness and social sensitivity. Drawing on the group development theory, we hypothesized that stability of diversity would enhance firm financial performance through the formation of internal trust, common group norms, and more efficient collaboration. Our findings reveal that adoption time and diversity stability partly moderate the effects of boardroom gender diversity on firm financial performance during crises. These results highlight the role of board gender diversity and how temporal dimensions of diversity play a role in shaping a firm's financial performance, with broader implications discussed throughout the paper.



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Poster pitch 4



**dr. Huyen Nguyen**

Postdoctoral Researcher in Economics & Sociology  
at University of Utrecht

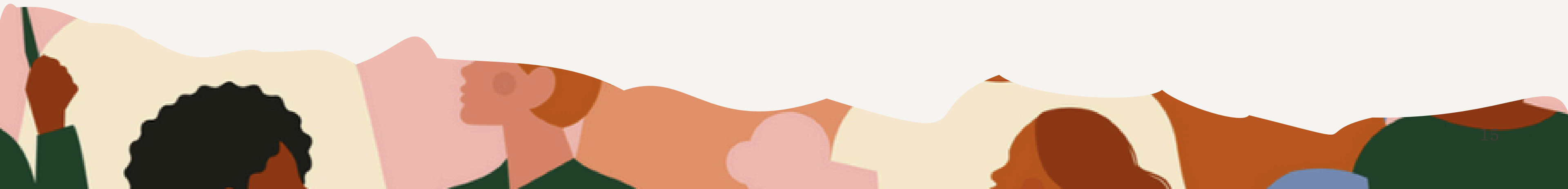


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## Intermediaries of inclusion? Recruiters' use of anonymized CVs and automation in multi-step hiring

*Huyen Nguyen (Utrecht University) and Valentina di Stasio (European University Institute)*

In multi-step hiring, intermediaries such as recruiters preselect candidates based on CVs and automated recommendations, shaping the applicant pool that hiring managers evaluate. Their expectations about client preferences may introduce bias, reinforcing discrimination despite diversity efforts. This study examines recruiters' role in a major real-world talent management firm that implemented an inclusive hiring policy, which gives recruiters extensive DEI training and the option to send anonymized CV to client companies. Using a survey with Bayesian truth-telling incentives and open-ended questions, we elicit recruiters' views on diversity in hiring. We also analyze their responses to understand their reasoning behind using (or not) anonymized CVs and automated recommender systems. Findings provide empirical insights into how intermediaries mediate diversity efforts, informing strategies for fairer hiring practices.



## Research talk 1



### **Prof. dr. Claudia Toma**

Professor of Social Psychology and Organizational Behavior at Université libre de Bruxelles

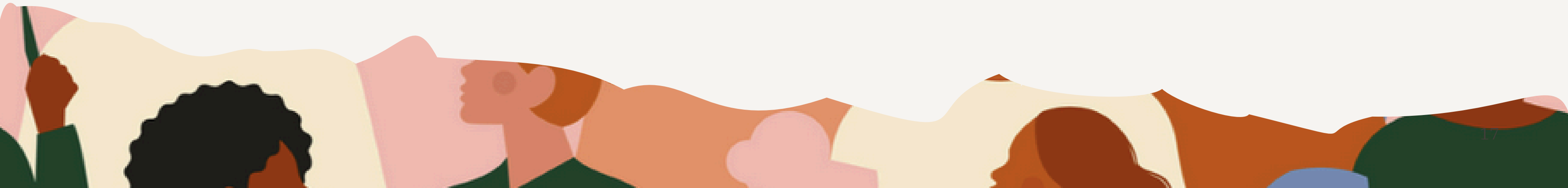


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## **Inclusive leadership, does it really help disadvantaged employees?**

*Claudia Toma (Université libre de Bruxelles), Julia Oberlin (Université libre de Bruxelles), Tessa Dover (Portland State University)*

Many organizations implement Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and train their leaders to adopt a more inclusive leadership style. Research suggests that inclusive leadership has many positive effects on employees. An important question remains, however, as to whether inclusive leadership benefits employees from disadvantaged groups. DEI policies often have a limited impact on these employees, and this could also be the case for inclusive leadership. In two studies conducted in organizations with DEI policies (Study 1 in the USA, Study 2 in Belgium), we tested this hypothesis. We measured inclusive leadership (Carmeli et al., (2010) as well as several organizational consequences (job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust and conflict in work teams, and turnover). Belonging to an advantaged or disadvantaged group was determined based on employees' demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, nationality) in conjunction with their subjective identification with one of these groups. In both studies, we found an overall positive effect of inclusive leadership. However, we also found that the effect was either more positive or only positive for advantaged employees compared to the disadvantaged ones. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.



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## Research talk 2



**dr. Jill Knapen**

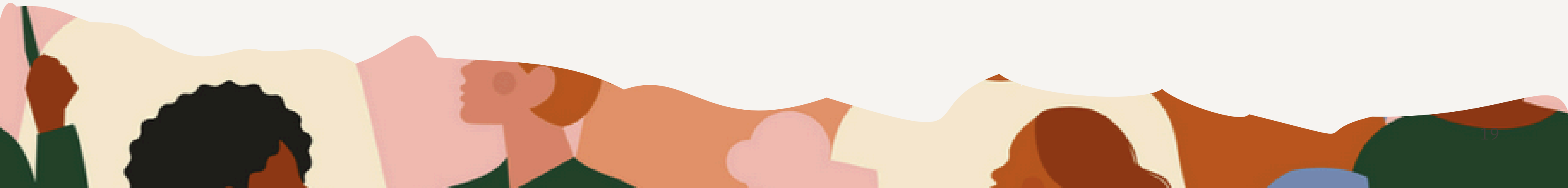
Assistant Professor of Work and Organizational Psychology

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## **It's all in the frame: Framing diversity policies to reduce attitudinal resistance towards gender quota and their beneficiaries**

*Jill Knapen (Open University), and Miriam Engels (Open University)*

To address the systematic underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions, governments are introducing gender quotas (GQ). Despite their effectiveness, GQ are controversial and generally perceived negatively. In this project, we aim to design strategic frames of communication that organizations can use to reduce attitudinal resistance of GQ, using three experimental studies and a Free Association Task. Our research addresses the challenge of communicating GQ in a positive way for all employees and contributes to the social sciences by investigating how policy information should be framed to influence public perceptions. Lastly, it informs practitioners about the best ways to implement GQ.



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## Research talk 3



**dr. Tanachia Ashikali**

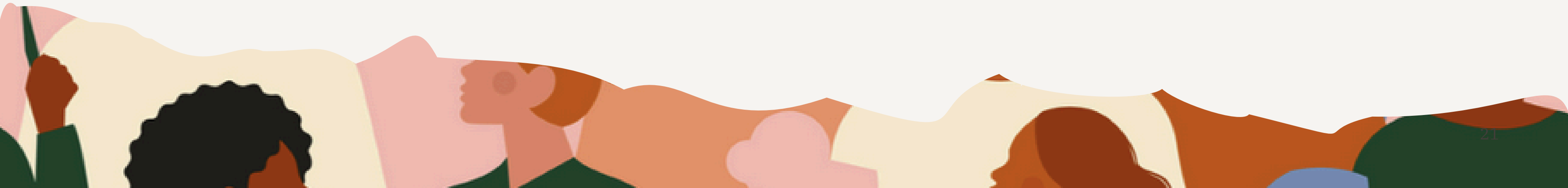
Assistant Professor in Public Management at Leiden University

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## **Unravelling inclusive leadership in organizations: Foundations, antecedents, and outcomes**

*Tanachia Ashikali (Leiden University)*

Inclusive leadership has garnered significant attention from academics and practitioners alike due to its critical role in cultivating open, safe, and inclusive work environments. This presentation explores a multifaceted framework to deepen our understanding of inclusive leadership, drawing on research into team diversity, inclusiveness, and the antecedents of inclusive leadership. Key principles, drivers, and the broader impact of inclusive leadership on individuals and organizations are examined, with a focus on both theoretical insights and practical applications. The discussion concludes by addressing implications for future research and organizational practice.



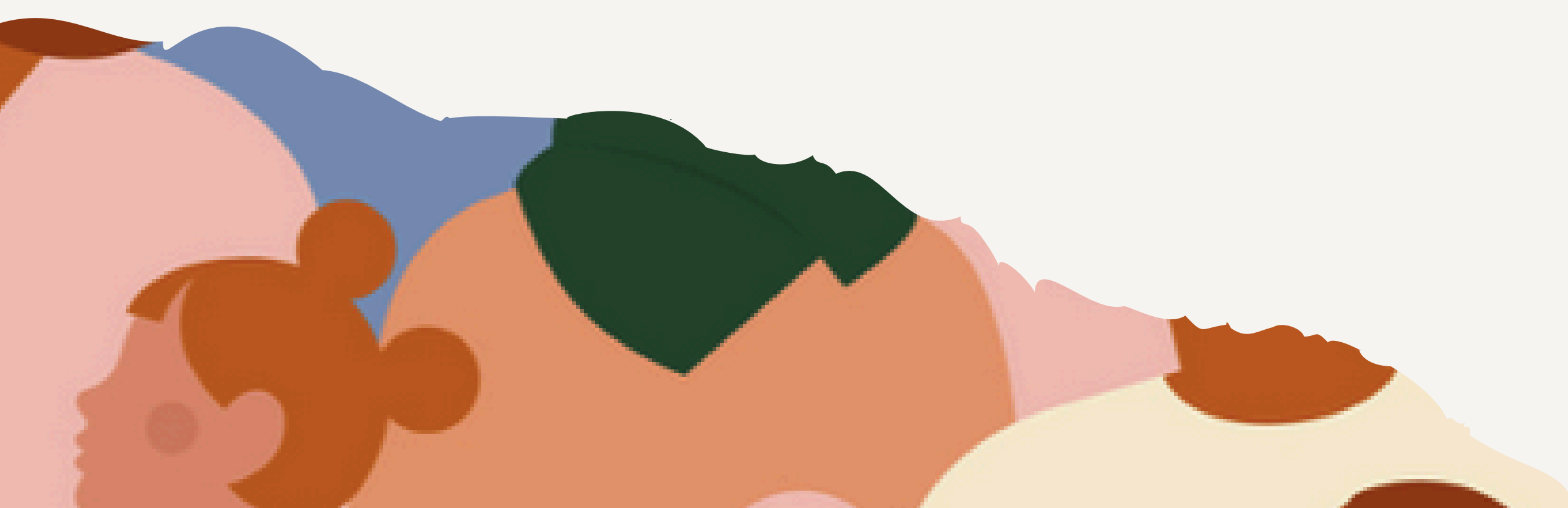
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Meet the expert 1



**dr. Shuai Yuan**

Assistant Professor in Analytics and Human Resource Management at University of Amsterdam

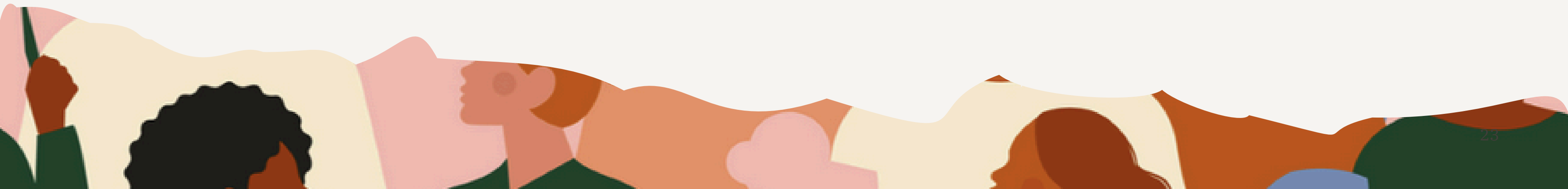


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## **Empowering DEI through artificial intelligence**

*Shuai Yuan (University of Amsterdam)*

At this expert table, we discuss the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics in empowering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The conversation focuses on two key areas: understanding and mitigating biases in AI systems and leveraging these technologies to address DEI-related issues, such as the gender pay gap.





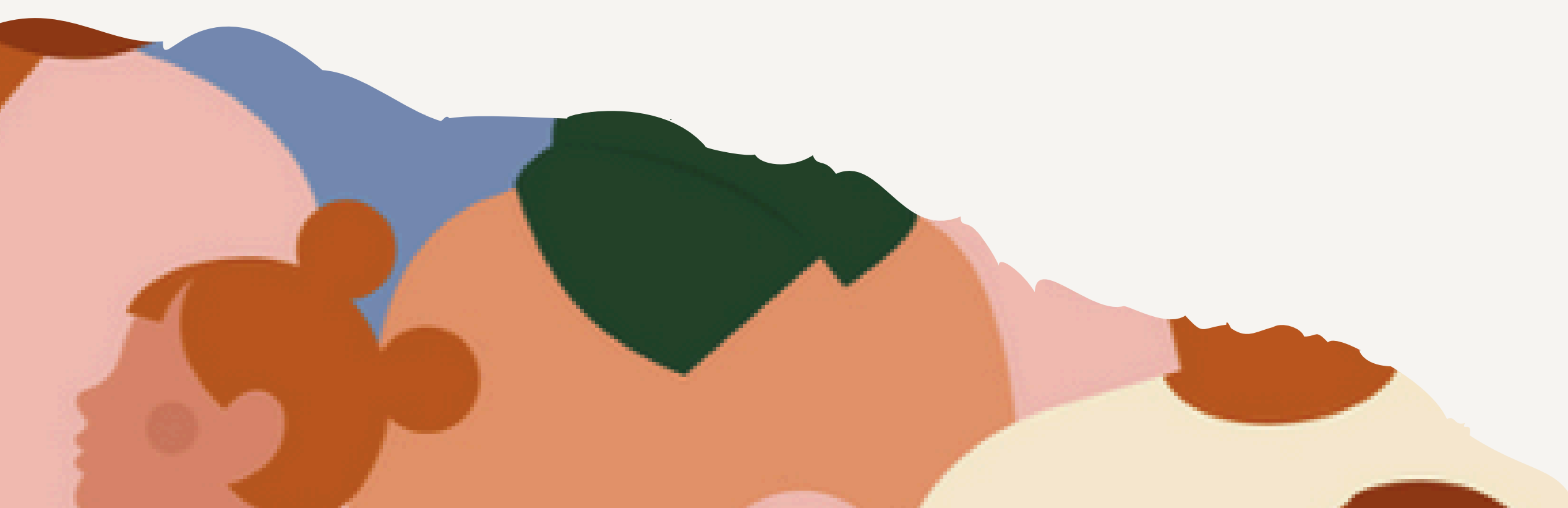
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Meet the expert 2



**dr. Christoph Janietz**

Postdoctoral Researcher in Sociology at University of Groningen



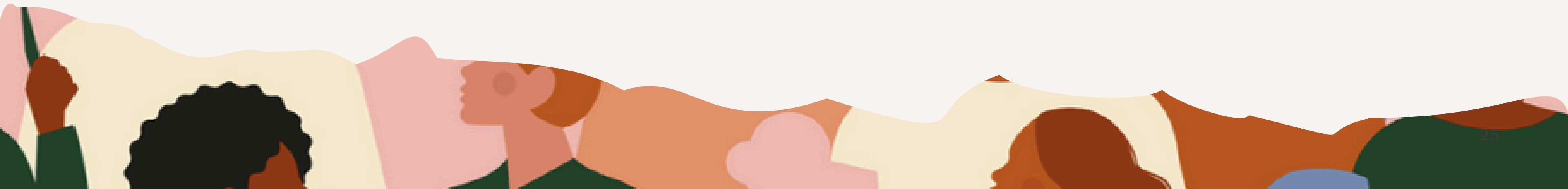


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## **Gender quotas and leadership: Navigating support and resistance**

*Christoph Janietz (University of Groningen)*

At this expert table, we will discuss the latest research on quotas in corporate boardrooms and the representation of women in leadership positions. Experts will provide insights into the effectiveness of gender equality policies in corporate governance by sharing key findings on how quotas affect diversity in organizations. We propose to discuss, in light of the recent reversal of DEI policies, how participants experience support and resistance to these policies within organizations and in society.



## Meet the expert 3



**dr. Lieselotte Blommaert**

Assistant professor of Sociology at Radboud University



**Prof. dr. Marieke van den Brink**

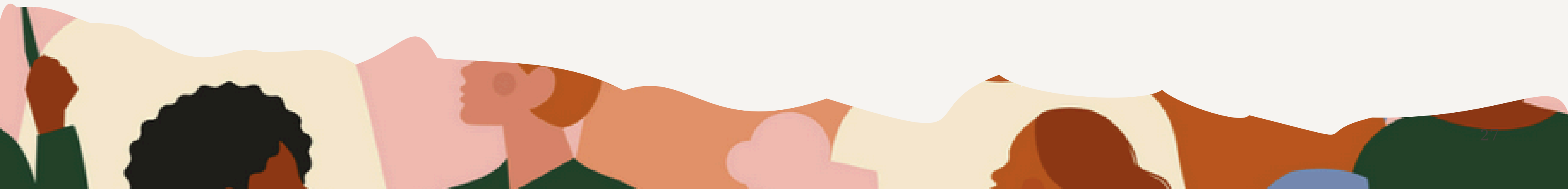
Professor of Gender & Diversity at Radboud University

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## **Intersectionality in DEI policies: Why is it important, and how to do it?**

*Lieselotte Blommaert (Radboud University), Marieke van den Brink (Radboud University)*

At this expert table, we provide insights into intersectionality, what it means, the benefits of taking it into account in DEI policies and potential pitfalls of not doing so. Participants are invited to share their experiences with (challenges involved in) incorporating intersectionality in DEI policies. We also welcome networking and matchmaking opportunities: we are looking for organizations that are potential partners in our research project, which aims to inform and guide organizational policy makers in developing and implementing DEI policies that effectively take into account intersectionality, following the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR).

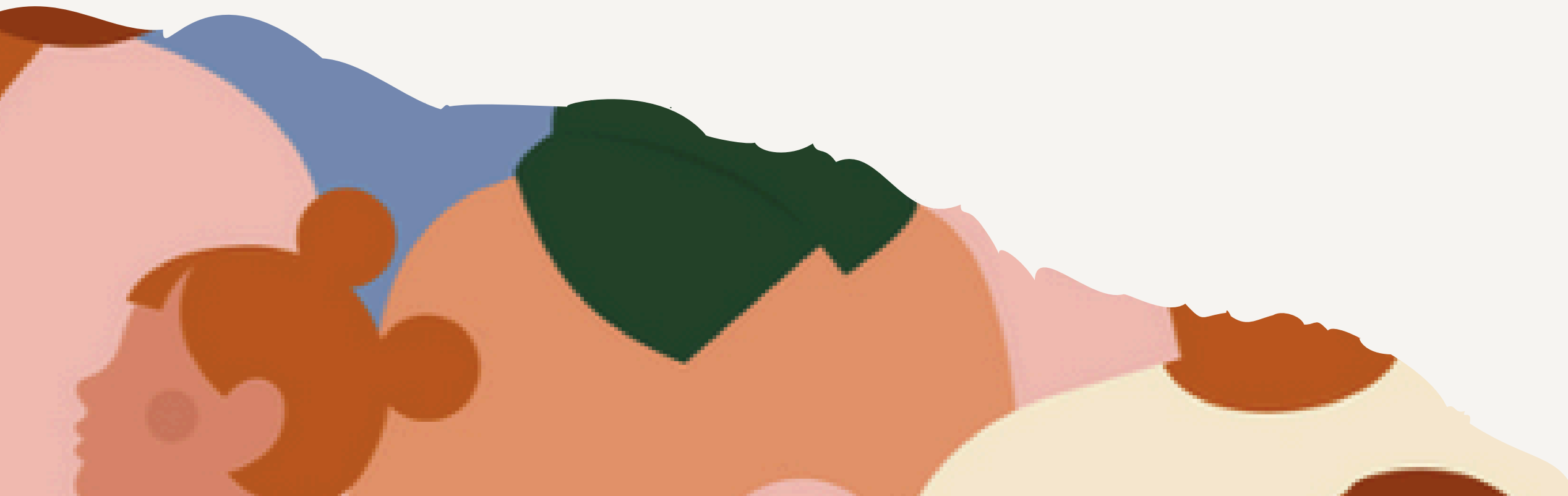


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Meet the expert 4



**Karima el Bouchtaoui**  
Founder Ocellus

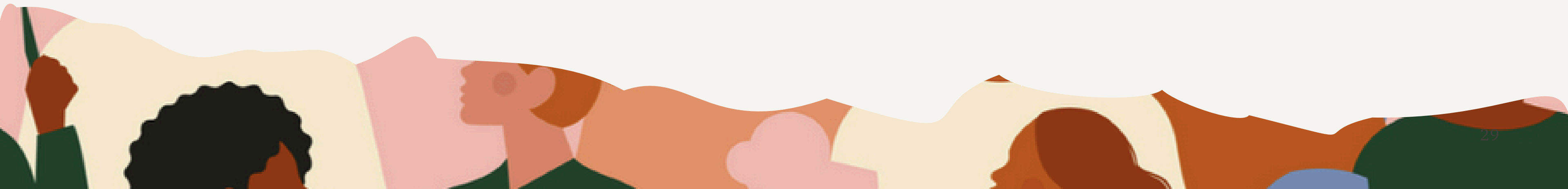


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## Attracting talent through competency-oriented recruitment

*Karima el Bouchtaoui (Founder Ocellus)*

In this interactive session, you'll discover how to identify the right talent by focusing on the specific skills and behaviors needed for success. We share practical tools, techniques and best practices to help you optimize recruitment processes and attract the best candidates. You will receive information based on concrete examples and existing research. During this session we share practical insights and strategies on attracting top talent in today's tight labor market.



## Research talk 4



### **Yonn Bokern**

PhD Candidate in Social and Organizational Psychology at Utrecht University

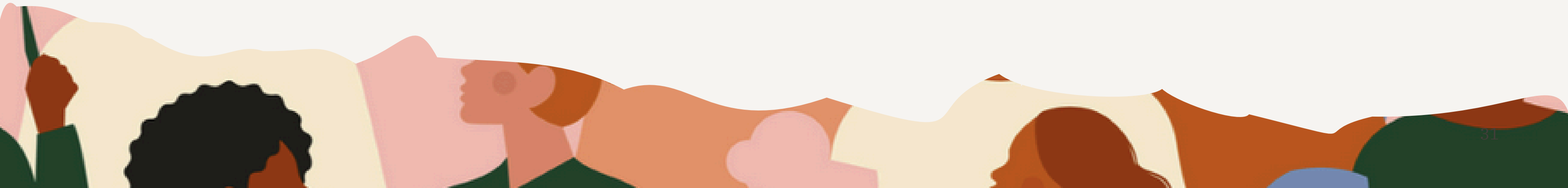


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## Talking the talk and walking the talk: Managerial support for D&I policies and workplace inclusion

*Yonn Bokern (Utrecht University), Jojanneke van der Toorn (Utrecht University), and Naomi Ellemers (Utrecht University)*

Research and practice reveal a persistent gap between D&I policies and their effective translation into practices that create an inclusive organizational climate. Studies on this topic often focus on only parts of the process. On one hand, efforts are made to identify *best practices* that consistently promote workplace inclusion, often without considering the role of leaders as gatekeepers of policy. On the other hand, research seeks to uncover ‘universal laws’ of effective leadership by identifying leadership styles that foster inclusion, yet frequently overlooks the broader influence of D&I policies—despite the fact that these policies shape leaders’ behaviors. This fragmented approach results in ineffective investments in D&I initiatives and leadership training. Our research bridges these perspectives by demonstrating that leaders operate within a dynamic triad: D&I policies, leadership, and employee experiences. In Study 1 (27 organizations,  $N = 13,441$ ), we examined how leaders support D&I policies in both attitude and behavior and identified five leadership D&I policy support profiles. In Study 2 ( $N = 4,080$ ), we explored how employees perceive this managerial support and its impact on their experiences of inclusion. Our findings emphasize that leaders must not only endorse D&I policies (“talking the talk”) but also actively embody them in their actions (“walking the talk”) to foster a truly inclusive organizational climate.



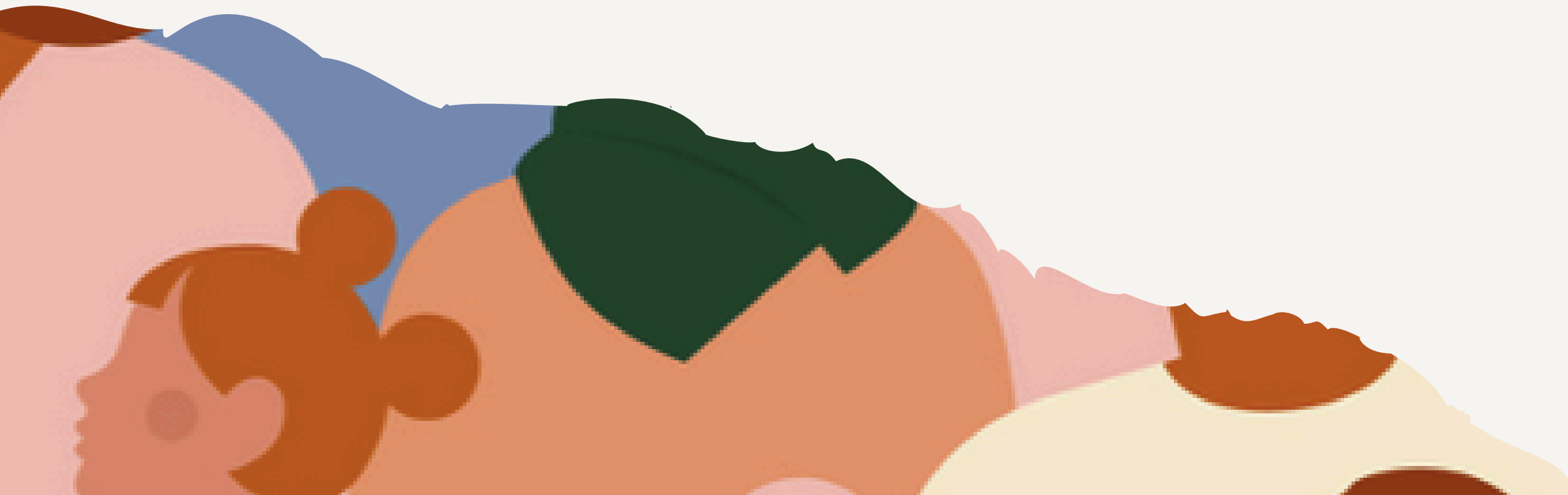
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Research talk 5



**dr. Zoltán Lippényi**

Associate Professor of Sociology at University of Groningen



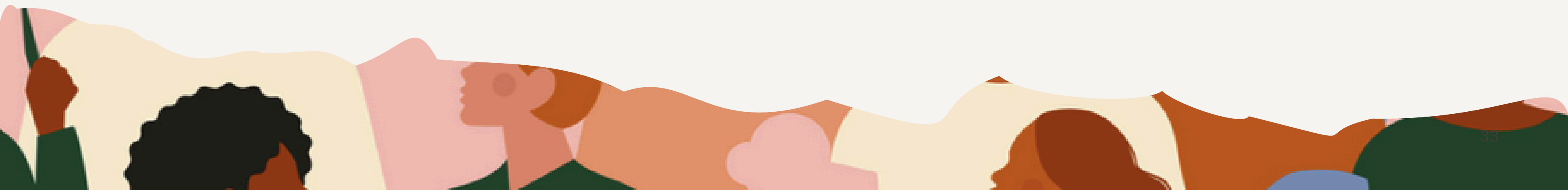


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## **Taking stock of diversity in Dutch company leadership**

*Zoltán Lippényi (University of Groningen)*

There is an ongoing discussion about the lack of demographic diversity in the leadership of Dutch companies. While much attention has been paid to the representation of women, we know much less about the development of diversity by migration background, ethnicity, foreign nationality, and intersectional diversity. I present new evidence based on novel and comprehensive data from administrative registers on demographic diversity among executive and non-executive directors and non-managerial employees of Dutch companies. By taking stock of how much progress has been made over the past fifteen years, which groups are underrepresented, and what national and organizational efforts have been made, I aim to define focus areas for diversity policy.



## Panel session



**Prof dr. Jojanneke van der Toorn**  
Moderator



**Prof. dr. Naomi Ellemers**

Distinguished University Professor Social and Organizational Psychology at Utrecht University



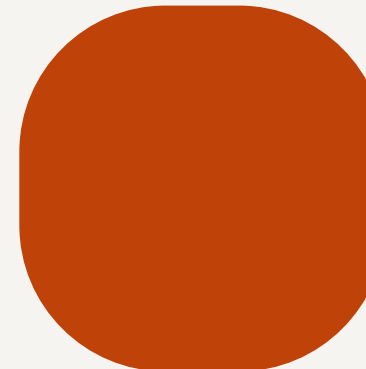
**Natalie Holwerda-Mieras**

Owner Nobbe Mieras trainings



**dr. Ayfer A. Veli Korkmaz**

Inclusive Leadership and Culture Lead Allianz



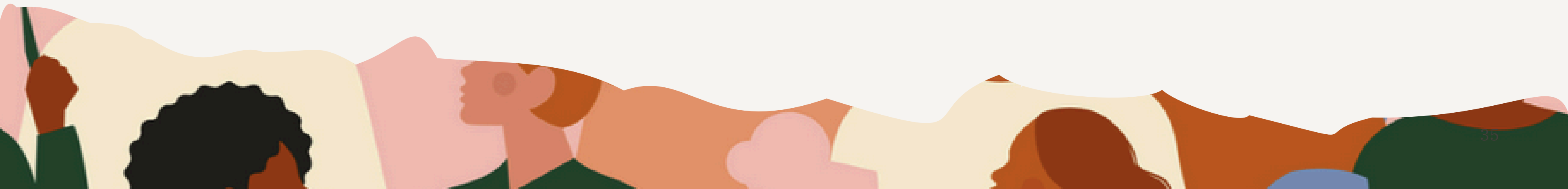
***TBC***

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## **DEI backlash - the role of leadership**

*Moderator Jojanneke van der Toorn*

In recent years, the push for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives has met with both enthusiastic support and significant resistance. This panel will explore the complexities of DEI backlash, focusing on the critical role that leadership plays in navigating and addressing these challenges. Expert panelists from the fields of academic research, training, and corporate practice will discuss strategies for leaders to effectively manage resistance, foster inclusive environments, and drive meaningful change within their organizations.



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## Organizers



**dr. Zoltán Lippényi**

Associate Professor of  
Sociology at University of  
Groningen



**Prof. dr. Jojanneke van der Toorn**

Professor of LGBT+ Workplace  
Inclusion at Leiden University,  
Associate Professor at Utrecht  
University



**Yonn Bokern**

PhD Candidate in Social and  
Organizational Psychology at  
Utrecht University



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