

Call for papers

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Ethnicity and Public Service. How the State Deals with Ethnic Differences

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Sociology has a long tradition of theoretical and empirical research on ethnicity and on processes of ethnic differentiation and the associated consequences (see, for example, Weber 1980 [1921]; Du Bois 1996 [1899]; Barth 1969; Glazer/Monyhan 1975). In recent years, ground-breaking studies have focussed on the context of public administration. This special issue wants to provide an overview of current sociological research addressing the perception and handling of ethnicity in various areas of public service. The aim is to show the importance of aspects and distinctions related to ethnicity in specific administrative contexts.

The topic of ethnicity and public service is of particular social and political relevance. State agencies not only provide grants or services on a voluntary basis, but also regulate access to diverse resources. In addition, public offices often have specific powers to intervene and to enforce constitutional claims by force. Ethnic distinctions are of great significance here, especially in the form of negative classifications (Neckel/Sutterlüty 2010, 218), which can be accompanied by discriminatory effects.

This special issue aims to contribute to a better understanding of the manifold interactive, organizational, discursive or statistical forms and processes of ethnic differentiation in public administration and shed light on the related affirmative effects (e.g. diversity; representative bureaucracy) as well as the exclusionary effects (e.g. institutional racism and discrimination). The international comparison should bring into focus the particular special features and characteristics of federally structured Swiss state administrations. How is ethnicity dealt with in public services and how do ethnic differences organize the administrative process – thus also with regard to the services' staff or when filling public positions? Can ethnicity be identified as a significant or powerful regulatory principle of public administration or state action?

Against this background, the nexus of ethnic differentiations and work practices in public institutions appears to be particularly interesting – and thus also the question of intersections of ethnicity with other forms of administrative distinctions and categorizations. Relevant questions in this context include the following: How are ethnic distinctions and categorizations produced in administrative processes, mobilized according to high or low relevance – but also (in the sense of undoing ethnicity) blurred, banalized or ignored? What is the significance of ethnic (non-)differentiations in the provision of public services or in sovereign state intervention?

This special issue is internationally oriented and welcomes theoretical as well as empirical contributions that pursue different methodological approaches. Studies that examine Swiss state administrations from a comparative perspective are particularly welcome. The contributions should address different forms of administrative racialization from a sociological perspective, covering different areas of public service (social administration and health care, migration authorities and institutions in the field of asylum, justice and the police, etc.) and different types of administration localized at different levels of government: municipal authorities as well as cantonal or federal administrations; departments of administrative services as well as organizations of the "Street-Level Bureaucracy", whose employees interact directly with the population.

*Please submit your proposal for a contribution to the guest editors by **15 November 2020**: esteban.pineiro@fhnw.ch oder c.wagner@uni-mainz.de*

Your submission for the special issue should include the following:

- *name, email address, and affiliations of all the authors*
- *title of the paper*
- *abstract of around 500 words, structured as follows: topic, aim, methods, results, discussion, conclusion.*

*The guest editors will decide on the acceptance or rejection of the abstract until **20 December 2020**.*

*Selected authors will be invited to submit their manuscript (max. 8,000 words, 50,000 characters including tables, figures and references) by **1 June 2021**. The manuscripts will go through the usual peer-review process of the Swiss Journal of Sociology. Accepted languages are English, German or French. More information about the Swiss Journal of Sociology and the submission process are available in www.sgs-sss.ch/sociojournal.*

Publication is planned for November 2022

For any queries, please contact the guest editors at the e-mail addresses mentioned above.

- Barth, Fredrik. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.
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- Neckel, Sighard und Ferdinand Sutterlüty. 2010. Negative Klassifikationen und ethnische Ungleichheit. In Marion Müller und Darius Zifonun (Hrsg.), *Ethnowissen. Soziologische Beiträge zu ethnischer Differenzierung und Migration* (S. 217–235). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
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