

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

Einleitung: Ethnizität und öffentliche Verwaltung. Zum staatlichen Umgang mit ethnischen Differenzen

Introduction : Ethnicité et administration publique. La gestion des différences ethniques par l'État

Esteban Piñeiro\* and Constantin Wagner\*\*

### 1 The Sociologization of Ethnicity and the Nation-State

The discipline of sociology has a long international tradition of both theoretical and empirical research on processes of ethnic differentiation and the manifold consequences that accompany them (see, for example, Weber 1980 [1921]; Du Bois 1995 [1899]; Barth 1969). However, it was not until the 1960s that the notion of ethnicity began to spread more widely in the sociological context and established itself as a fundamental concept. As late as the mid-1970s, Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (1975, 1), in their classic reader, promoted “ethnicity” as “a new term” helping to understand what was meant by “black politics” or “to find a satisfactory place for the French-speaking element in an undivided Canada” (Glazer and Moynihan 1975, 2). The relevance of this new sociological category was high and equivalent to the classical category of social class. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the political demands for a “representative bureaucracy” (Kingsley 1944), which exposed the problems of the relationship between public administration and “ethnic groups or minorities”, were also responsible for this increase in significance. One example was the context of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> In German-language sociology, the concept of ethnicity has been gaining in importance since the 1980s, thus returning to a certain extent from the American debate, decades after Max Weber (1980 [1921], 237) had sharpened the concept to his famous sociological definition of an *ethnic commonality belief* [«ethnischen Gemeinsamkeitsglauben»]. As the ethnic community is increasingly discussed in social sciences towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Imhof 1997), the *nexus of ethnicity and the state* in its national (or

1 In the meantime, many empirical studies have emerged that attribute an essential role to the representation of ethnocultural diversity in the provision of administrative services or the filling of public positions (see, among others, Sowa and Colman Selden 2003; Calmar Anderson 2017)

\* University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, School of Social Work, Hofackerstrasse 30, 4132 CH-Muttenz, esteban.pineiro@fhnw.ch

\*\* University of Mainz, Institute of Education, Jakob-Welder-Weg 12, 55128 D-Mainz, c.wagner@uni-mainz.de

nationalistic) form is also receiving increased scientific attention (cf., for example, Heckmann 1991; Eriksen 1993 or Bommers 1994). The connection had also become obvious in the course of the enormous political shifts and system changes after 1989 (Linder 1998; Groenemeyer 2003). In parallel, a discourse diagnosed as growing and violent xenophobia (Imhof 1993; see also Hoffmann-Nowotny and Hondrich 1982) toward immigrants and minorities perceived as belonging to other ethnicities or ethnic groups gained more attention in Western Europe while strong migratory movements were in progress (Esser 1980; cf. Hall 2018). The sociological mindset of those years is documented in relevant publications such as «Das Fremde in der Gesellschaft: Migration, Ethnizität und Staat» [The foreign in society: migration, ethnicity, and the state] (Wicker et al. 1996) or «Nationalismus, Multikulturalismus und Ethnizität» [“Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Ethnicity”] (Wicker 1998).

Since then, the connection between ethnicity and public administration has lost neither its social and political explosiveness nor its academic significance. Regarding the now hardly manageable state of international research, this Special Issue focuses on current contributions from qualitative empirical social research. This offers the opportunity to explicitly address the construction processes of ethnic categories that are covered up in other disciplines – in part, however, also in sociology itself – and that in a certain sense double the dominant socio-political perceptions and corresponding power structures (Dahinden and Anderson 2021, 33). All the contributions collected in the issue develop a special attention to ethnic categorization and mobilization processes when questioning the social meaning that is given to ethnic aspects and distinctions in the respective administrative context, which is why they can be assigned to the *Reflexive Turn* (cf. chapter 2) to a certain extent. More concretely, the question is: How is ethnicity produced in selected areas of public administration such as the police, child and youth welfare, disability insurance, or the asylum sector and mobilized in dealing with certain persons, groups or social phenomena? Or, to put it another way: How do ethnic markings or differentiations co-organize the administrative process – sometimes also in relation to their own administrative staff or when filling public positions? As the contributions further show, ethnic differentiations in the context of an officially and sometimes coercively acting state administration can often also go hand in hand with discriminatory effects (cf. chapter 3). In this context, public administration shows itself to be an extremely diverse ensemble of organizations, discourses, processes, or practices (cf. chapter 4). Ethnicization takes place in relation to this heterogeneous administrative diversity, whereby administrative actors respectively street-level workers have great discretionary powers in direct contact with their counterparts at the street level (cf. chapter 5). Of particular interest here is therefore how and when ethnic characteristics are brought into play and made significant in certain contexts or situations and how and when they are also blurred or ignored (cf. chapter 6).

## 2 Methodological Self-Criticism and Reflexive Turn

A concise methodological reflection can be found early on in the social sciences, which refers to the contemporary diagnostic analyses of the ethnonational-state complex and such problematizes the own usage of the terms *ethnicity* and *nation-state* (Anderson 1983; Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). In “Rethinking Nationalism and Ethnicity” Wicker (1997, 1) states right at the beginning of his introduction that there is now a broad consensus in the social sciences regarding the theoretical status of ethnic, cultural, and national categories: “There is no such thing as an ethnic, cultural, or national essence; formations which appear as ethnic groups, as cultures, or as nations should no longer be considered as supra-subjective wholes. (...) Instead, they should be interpreted as the products of history, therefore as resulting from concrete acts.” Based on this shift in perspective, ethnicities or ethnic groups cannot be characterized by a stable, identifiable, and delimitable culture (Groenemeyer 2003). Instead, they result from an interplay of social practices, cultural knowledge contexts, and power relations (Dahinden 2016; Chimienti et al. 2021; on the reflexive turn in ethnicity-related research Reuter 2002 or Nieswand and Drotbohm 2014). In his sociological analysis, Max Weber (1980 [1921], 237) already started from an ethnic commonality [«Gemeinsamkeit»] instead of a natural community [«Gemeinschaft»] to define ethnicity – as a *sense* of kinship that is based on similarities of external habitus or customs (Weber’s (1980 [1921], 237) or on differences of a *believed* common culture and associated characteristics, such as language, religion, ways of thinking and behaving, regional origin, customs, or traditions (cf. also Rex 1990; Hall 2018). Fredrik Barth (1969, 15), in his classic “Ethnic Groups and Boundaries”, also concludes that the “critical focus of investigation is the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses”. In addition, Andreas Wimmer (1996) denaturalizes the nation-state as a nationalist project that feeds on the formation of an imagined national community with territorial reference by a linking of national belonging and legal claims, and on the nationalization of bureaucracy. The nation-state does this to produce state, territory, and culture as possessions of a nation. While Wimmer (1996) problematizes the ethnicization of bureaucracy and proposes to dissolve the nation-state (not the state), Bukow and Llaryora (1988), with their concept of *sociogenesis of ethnicity*, ask what in a specific place produces differences, namely those that activate, actualize, even produce ethnic markings. Together with many other social science positions,<sup>2</sup> such approaches deconstruct the assumption of

2 The deconstructive trend toward classical essentializing and totalizing concepts of ethnicity is evident in many reformulations of ethnicity in the social sciences, the traces of which can be followed up into contemporary sociological reflection, which is now almost impossible to survey: Fredrik Barth’s (1969) key work “Ethnic Groups and Boundaries” as well as Lamont and Molnar’s (2002) “Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences” or Wimmer’s (2008) “The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries”; Staiano’s (1980) “Ethnicity as Process,” Roosens’s (1989) “Creating Ethnicity” on the “Process of Ethnogenesis” or Brubaker’s (2004, 11) concept of a category under the aspect of the “relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated”; Dahinden et al.

a core of ethnicity as a primordial property of individuals (“the migrants”), groups, or nations, to interpret ethnic belonging in particular as a subsequent naturalization of inequality structures and power differentials between majority and minority groups (Nieswand 2014). The counter-readings and deconstructions of essentialist and nationalist conceptions of ethnicity emanating from social anthropological (Keesing 1994 or Touraine 1988) and postcolonial (Said 1978; Hall 1994) critique led – at least among those researching within the qualitative paradigm – to a specific methodological sensitivity in exploring differences and differentiation (cf. Fritzsche and Tervooren 2012).<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it led to questions of representation and power relations in knowledge production (Dittrich and Radtke 1990; Dahinden, Fischer et al. 2020). Of course, the awareness of these problems in sociology has not resulted in a dissolution of such forms of ethnic categorization. Moreover, a sociological discourse on ethnicity potentially still contributes to a problematic reification of ethnic categorization (Diehm et al. 2010; Kelle 2016).

### 3 Bureaucratic (Re-)Production of Ethnic Differences

The relationship between ethnicity and public administration has a particular social and political relevance. The (nation) state plays a crucial role in the discursive or statistical production, programmatic arrangement, and institutional entrenchment of ethnic categories (Yanow et al. 2016; Dahinden and Anderson 2021). The state’s or nation-state’s administrative apparatus creates social realities by producing and canonizing social categories (Bourdieu 2014; Piñeiro 2015), for instance, with the allocation of different rights for certain citizens, in the management of affiliation, the interpretation or weighting of social and political problems, or in the context of discriminatory practices (see, for instance, Lavanchy 2013; Nieswand and Drotbohm 2014; Wagner 2017). In this context, state institutions not only provide benefits or services, but also manage access to diverse resources and distribute individual opportunities or privileges (Eckert 2020, 10). Certain authorities also have specific intervention rights (Mayntz 1985, Hasenfeld 1987 or Tschentscher 2019). Parts of the public administration represent the monopoly of the force of the (national) state, can intervene widely in citizens’ private sphere, and are in direct and frequent contact with customers, citizens, and clients (Fassin 2013; Piñeiro et al. 2021a). They often have different settings of coercion with finely graduated intensities of control and intervention, which addressees cannot escape without having to accept the corresponding consequences or sanctions (Nieswand 2014; Pasche et al. 2018;

---

(2020) “Knowledge Production, Reflexivity, and the Use of Categories in Migration Studies”, Wallmann’s (1979) *Ethnicity at Work*, Wieviorka’s (1994) *Ethnicity as Action*, and so on.

3 Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller (2002), in turn, criticize a methodological nationalism still prevalent in the social sciences that take nation-states as given in terms of delimited entities (see Anderson 2019, *Towards Methodological Denationalism*).

Koch et al. 2019; Piñeiro et al. 2021b). Conscious and unconscious distinctions qua ethnicity are of great consequence here, especially in the form of negative classifications (Neckel and Sutterlüty 2010), which can be accompanied by stigmatizing dominance effects (Elrick and Farah Schwartzmann 2015). As these classifications as well as the corresponding effects are institutionalized and can mostly be traced back to a (pseudo-)scientific, (post-)colonial order of human beings, ethnic-cultural differences here prove to be “power relations” that are articulated in the form of “hierarchization and subordination structures” (Hall 2018, 177), in other words: racist classifications. In numerous international studies, such a function of ethnicity is revealed and problematized as it is accompanied by processes of devaluation and disadvantage of migrants or so-called ethnic minorities, unless the (re)construction process of ethnicity comes into focus (Supik 2014; Duemmler 2015). However, it should not be overlooked that potentially negative categorizations can also be appropriated and reinterpreted. In this sense, they can also be used to empower or be given particular weight (Wimmer 2008; Duemmler and Dahinden 2016).

#### 4 State as Context of Ethnicity

The contributions in this special issue focus on public administration as a context or as a site of the (re-)production of ethnic categorizations. This brings the state apparatus into the focus of attention, understood as a heterogeneous ensemble consisting of numerous organizations, procedures and instruments of authority, discourses, actors, or practices. A specific and thus also limited area of the state and statehood is illuminated, focusing on the institutional-legal dimension of the state or state administration (Fassin 2015; Jessop 2016). The contributions, then, focus on individual disaggregated organizations, branches, levels, or specialized discourses that, taken together, provide an impression of state administration as a dynamic and disparate entity in its multi-layered plural reality (cf. Sharma and Gupta 2006). Concepts such as that of “state bureaucracy” or “public administration” (Eckert 2020, 7–8), which are inscribed with the *idea of the official* (Bourdieu 2014), should not obscure the fact that the boundary of the state or state action would prove to be a well-founded illusion upon closer inspection, for instance, with Bourdieu (2014). Foucault (2000; 2006) had noted that the state had no heart, no innards to which the essence or substance of it could be traced. With his concept of governmentality, Foucault explores the state starting from different ways of acting and thinking of governing as a moveable effect of a system of multiple governmentalities. Numerous analyses show that the boundaries between state and society, between the state sector and non-state or private spheres, are fluid, and governmental practices extend far beyond the sphere of state action (Gramsci 1991, on this also Rose and Miller 1992 or Dean 2007). Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a state sphere that pro-

duces, as a dynamic set of relations, an institutional structure of administration, bureaucratic organizations, administrative routines, and an administrative practice or official administrative knowledge-structures, actions, discourses, provided with an authority that gradually, through a concatenation of delegations refers to the state (Bourdieu 2014). Power relations connected to the state are sometimes also concentrated in those state institutions that explicitly place themselves at the service of the *res publica*, public affairs, and the common good. They pursue the enforcement and preservation of the public interest through performing duties under the rule of law (Fassin 2015). Organizations and procedures of this public administrative complex are officialized through state symbols (forms, logos, function designations, license plates), and state authority and the public status of mandates and persons are marked by a tone of voice, office furnishings, or work settings (Sharma and Gupta 2006; Piñeiro et al. 2021a).

## 5 On the Nexus of Ethnicizations and Administrative Execution

When contextualized in this heterogeneous administrative reality, ethnicity comes into focus related to organizational, discursive, or situational contexts of interaction, namely as a result, effect, or foundation of administrative work contexts and processes, political frameworks, legal foundations, programmatic tailoring, or discourses on citizenship and affiliation (Wagner 2017; Piñeiro et al. 2019; Ray 2019). Consequently, with state structures or labor processes, something other than *just* a labor product is produced as well (Wetterer 2002, 130; Nieswand 2014). Against this background, the nexus of ethnicization, work situations, or work processes in public institutions seems particularly interesting. Thus, the question regarding the crossing of ethnic differentiations with further work- or administration-related differentiations and categorizations is equally relevant (Gruhlich and Seeliger 2019).

In this context, all of those administrative departments and frontline staff characterized by pronounced personal contact with the population are of particular interest, for it is in such areas that civilians meet the state in action. Research on organizations such as schools, courts, social services, youth welfare services, or police that operate on the front lines often works with the notion of “Street-Level Bureaucracy” coined by Michael Lipsky (2010 [1980]; see, for example, Hupe et al. 2016; Borrelli and Bochsler 2020). In everyday direct interaction with counterparts, state personnel has relatively high discretionary and decision-making powers (Wagenaar 2020), which opens up a wide range of possibilities for dealing with *ethnicity*. For example, police officers on patrol have to decide *in situ* who to stop and control and which behaviors to ignore (Epp et al. 2014; Howe 2016). Social workers, in turn, filter out those aspects from the complexity of individual human fates so that they can deal with them within the framework of their organizational work setting. In

doing so, individuals with their specific problems are converted into workable cases that the social workers can handle and fit into their repertoire of available solutions (Maeder and Nadai 2004; Hasenfeld 2010).

Individual values, habitus, and “belief systems” (Soni 2000, 406), as well as the role perception of the actors involved, can be of utmost importance in the provision of public services or sovereign state intervention (Schultheis and Vogel 2014; Piñeiro et al. 2021b). Consequently, employees of state institutions cannot fully be understood as rational executors in Weber’s sense (Weber 1980 [1921]) than as being able to perform their tasks differently depending on the addressee and work situation. However, the fact that frontline administrators necessarily operate with discretionary and decision-making latitude does not mean that interactions do not follow organizational rules. Materials, procedures, and processes, some of which are highly standardized and act as quasi-objectifying mechanisms, are significant for administrative execution. There is an inherent relationship between rule enforcement and discretionary power (Ellis 2007; Evans 2013). Street-level workers translate applicable rules situationally, thus exploring the options of existing freedoms of action and decision-making (Hupe et al. 2016). In this way, the meaning of legal framings can be adapted in practice enforcement, as studies on the actions of migration authorities show (for example Alpes and Spire 2014; Vandevoordt 2018; Eule et al. 2019;). Immigration officials use clarification criteria and categorizations that are less derived from official legal regulations and more anchored in the offices’ subculture (Jubany 2011 and also Lavanchy 2013).

## 6 Ethnicity as Sliding and Solidified Difference

The connection between ethnicity and public administration points to the *artificial* way in which ethnicity is created (Weber 1980 [1921]) and thus to structures, dynamics, processes, and practices of producing, solidifying, or blurring ethnic attributions or distinctions. Therefore, ethnicity can be conceptualized as a consequence of production processes or social closure (Wimmer 2008), making the social construction and social organization of ethnocultural categories and differences sociologically relevant. This brings into view the manifold practices and processes of ethnic marking and differentiation that can be situationally activated as well as strategically deployed. Ethnic categorizations prove here to be a possible resource of distinction or devaluation, which can be used when it seems helpful for the pursuit of interests and goals or in terms of understanding and thus being able to work through a situation (Scherschel 2006; Piñeiro et al. 2019). However, the question of what people and organizations do with such categories becomes central (Brubaker 2004), and it also underscores the question of which of the various forms ethnicity



functions in. Thus, ethnicity proves to be a dynamic practice, and ethnic differences are sliding differences.

Here, the practical administrative ways to categorize ethnicity are of interest, specifically how ethnic differences are constructed, enacted, or marked in everyday work, and how they are produced as “achievement” (Garfinkel 1984 [1967], 116) through practical action or become an *execution reality* (Bergmann 2000). Ethnicity becomes the sociological object here as a category under the aspect of the “relational, processual, dynamic, eventful, and disaggregated” (Brubaker 2004, 11). Practices and processes of ethnicizing or ethnic differentiation become starting points of the analysis. From an ethnomethodological perspective, ethnicity appears as a *doing* (Piñeiro et al. 2021a), as a practical performance or something that happens when ethnic categories become relevant to the participants in the course of a particular interactional movement (Brubaker 2004), or in the context of professional work practices (Lavanchy 2013; Wagner 2016). For Hirschauer (2017), ethnicity can be understood as a form of *human differentiation* that begins with places of birth, languages, human bodies, beliefs, or achievements. It can also extend to secondary characteristics such as associated objects, symbols, behaviors, activities, or social positions. Human differentiations are thus based on meaningful contingent distinctions that occur in an interplay of representational performances and attributions (Kubisch 2008; also see Barth 1969) that can also solidify (Piñeiro et al. 2021a). Ethnic categorizations can be mobilized and downplayed in their situational significance, they can be dramatized and trivialized, blurred, or ignored (Fassin 2013; Nieswand 2014). *Undoing ethnicity* or allowing an indifference toward ethnic categories are also conceivable in which the possibility of their irrelevance is given (Hirschauer 2014). Furthermore, ethnic-cultural affiliations can take place as unreflected everyday representations as well as conscious stagings. The results of the empirical contributions in this anthology are correspondingly multifaceted.

## 7 Contributions to this special issue

*Daniel Schumann* analyzes the cooperation between local administrations and immigrant associations designated as “bridge builders” in the dispositive of collaborative inclusion. The author views these collaborations from a governmentality theory perspective, which allows them to be understood as a powerful practice of behavioral control. Cooperation with migrant organizations is partly seen as a solution to ethnicized social problems, and partly they mobilize ethnicity as a resource to solve them. In order to make themselves heard with their expertise, the migrant organizations have to refer affirmatively to integration policy expectations and their ethnicizing premises, which, however, depoliticize and weaken their potential for criticism. Migrant organizations deal with this paradox in a highly reflexive way



and develop strategies to maneuver the spaces of enablement and limitation opened in cooperation settings. *Christine Lang's* article addresses the growing demands to employ more staff of immigrant origin in local administrations in Berlin. These "difference conscious" demands occur vis-à-vis a context where traditional accounts of bureaucratic "difference blindness" are dominant. Lang's analysis shows that racialized constructions of "unsuitable candidates" stabilized established norms, routines, and beliefs – including the myth of meritocracy – and discharged the administration from reflecting on the potentially discriminatory effects of its recruitment practices: paradoxically, policies aiming to foster the inclusion of ethnic minorities can foster the production of racialized constructions of their (presumed) unsuitability. At the same time, racialized representations of "(un)suitable candidates" are not stable and thus not only reproduce discriminatory structures, but may also be element and manifestation of, at least partial organizational "openings".

*Nathalie Pasche* reconstructs police-specific talk about diversity on the basis of biographical narrative interviews in two Swiss police corps. A large part of the police officers smooths out differences regarding sexual orientation, gender, migration, or professional background by de-thematizing, neutralizing, or externalizing differences. In her analysis of the narrated occupational biographies Pasche shows that the actors try to smooth down differences ("smooth out diversity") by referring to the organizational narrative of the "police as a family". The interviewees highlight their common work experience and their attachment to the organization. This strategy makes it possible to become an integral, non-questioned part of the police but also tends to reproduce the hegemonic "cop culture". *Faten Khazaei's* ethnographic study looks at how police officers assess risk and intervene differently in cases of "domestic violence" based on their perception of "ethno-racial affiliation" of the people concerned. By examining the "Sri Lankan case", a narrative present in the investigated police unit that assumes members of this "ethno-racial group" are more likely to commit serious acts of violence, she shows how officers construct relatively similar cases as different and how this, in turn, justifies different treatment. Khazaei identifies three interrelated explanatory factors that influence these practices of police officers: firstly generalized ideas about the racialization of violence against women in Switzerland; secondly the professional logic of the police in categorizing the individuals involved, and thirdly the specific memory of this police corps in French-speaking Switzerland, shaped by two emblematic cases of domestic violence involving two families of Sri Lankan nationality.

*Zoë Clark, Fabian Fritz, Caroline Inhoffen and Jonas Kohlschmidt* demonstrate that racial profiling in so-called "danger zones", which enable control without suspicion, represents a formalism of social space that manifests itself through ritualistic everyday repetitions. According to the authors the formal character of criminogenically classified dangerous places is further transferred from police to child and youth welfare organizations via informal practices. In this way, young people are taught

techniques to legitimize themselves and their presence in “dangerous places”, to create a form of self-normalization or they are advised to just stay away from these places. Paradoxically, precisely in an attempt to reduce the vulnerability of young people and protect them against discriminatory police practices, child and youth welfare itself becomes part of a national border regime and is also a component of the policing of urban spaces. *Sélim Clerc’s* contribution focusses on practices and representations mobilized by street-level workers in state-funded associations managing North African unaccompanied minor migrants (UAMs) in Geneva. The author investigates the everyday assessment and production of deservingness and shows the importance of doubt and of perceived vulnerability in the informal evaluation process. Thereby social constructions of childhood, race, and gender influence street-level workers’ perceptions and thus also “hierarchies of vulnerability”. When unaccompanied refugee minors are perceived as young women or “kids”, they are seen as innocent and vulnerable victims. For male adolescents, on the other hand, vulnerability collides with representations of dangerous young migrants. They become humanitarian hardship cases that are almost impossible to conceptualize, as these racialized and gendered images impede their recognition as innocent and vulnerable. *Jean-Pierre Tabin* and *Leslie Ader* show how people who apply for disability insurance can be subjected to various kinds of categories that ultimately allow them to be excluded. First, processes of hierarchization and devaluation of those whose abilities do not conform to the norm play a role. Next, the authors show how (in)ability intersects with territorial differences of belonging that justify unequal treatment of natives and people of foreign nationality. The analyses illustrate how public and political discourses are taken up, used, and transformed by (state) organizations and actors, and how the respective constructions of ethnicities are thereby stabilized or dynamized. The study of Swiss disability law also shows that people of foreign nationality who fall under the “handicapology” are subject to three types of temporality that allow for their exclusion. It becomes apparent that differences based on origin, in particular, can be used for racial discrimination in access to social benefits.

The contributions show that state actors can draw on ethnic differences as a *fait social*, sometimes in legally codified form. Alongside other forms of human differentiation, with which ethnicity partly intersects, they thus become part of administrative action. Unequal assessments and behaviors can thus appear justified or even seem rather necessary. Social power relations, which are also established through ethnicity, are thus reproduced and stabilized. At the same time, ethnic distinctions are increasingly problematized in public-political debates. However, attempts to foster the inclusion of “ethnic minorities” in public administration and state institutions can thereby, paradoxically, foster the production of ethnicizing constructions of their (presumed) otherness. This in turn leads, at least in some institutional contexts, to the need for members of “minorities” to downplay experiences of difference. At the same time, institutional “opening processes” unfold a dynamic that can partially

undermine and shift power relations, which can hardly be captured by statistical measurement. The qualitative, empirical studies presented here succeed in making the social construction of ethnic human attributions and groups a topic instead of treating it as a given fact. Up to the present, such analyses, although they have strong models in sociological thought, appear rather marginal overall. Such approaches are necessary, however, if sociology is not to participate in the reflection-needy and problematic consolidation of ethnic categorizations. After all, we see our task precisely in illuminating and scientifically deconstructing social orders.

## 8 References

- Alpes, Maybritt J., and Alexis Spire. 2014. Dealing With Law in Migration Control: The Powers of Street-Level Bureaucrats at French Consulates. *Social and Legal Studies* 23(2): 261–274.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, Bridget. 2019. New Directions in Migration Studies: Towards Methodological De-Nationalism. *Comparative Migration Studies* 7(36): 34–39.
- Barth, Fredrik. 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.
- Bergmann, Jörg R. 2000. Ethnomethodologie. Pp. 118–135 in *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch*, edited by Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff, and Ines Steinke. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Bommes, Michael. 1994. Migration und Ethnizität im nationalen Sozialstaat. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 23(5): 364–377.
- Borrelli, Lisa Marie, and Yann Bochsler (eds.). 2020. Governing the Poor – Migration and Poverty. *Journal of Social Policy* 66(4).
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 2014. *Über den Staat*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Brubaker, Rogers. 2004. *Ethnicity Without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bukow, Wolf-Dietrich, and Roberto Llaryora. 1988. *Mitbürger aus der Fremde. Soziogenese ethnischer Minoritäten*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Calmar Andersen, Simon. 2017. From Passive to Active Representation – Experimental Evidence on the Role of Normative Values in Shaping White and Minority Bureaucrats’ Policy Attitudes. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 27(3): 400–414.
- Chimienti, Milena, Claudio Bolzman, and Didier Ruedin. 2021. Introduction: The Sociology of Migration in Switzerland: Past, Present and Future. *Swiss Journal of Sociology* 47(1): 1–20.
- Dahinden, Janine. 2016. A Plea for the “De-Migranticization” of Research on Migration and Integration. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39(13): 2207–2225.
- Dahinden, Janine, and Bridget Anderson. 2021. Exploring New Avenues for Knowledge Production in Migration Research: A Debate Between Bridget Anderson and Janine Dahinden Pre and After the Burst of the Pandemic. *Swiss Journal of Sociology* 47(1): 27–52.
- Dahinden, Janine, Caroline Fischer, and Joanna Manet. 2020. Knowledge Production, Reflexivity, and the Use of Categories in Migration Studies: Tackling Challenges in the Field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 44(4): 535–554.
- Dean, Mitchell. 2007. *Governing Societies*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Diehm, Isabell, Melanie Kuhn, and Claudia Machold. 2010. Die Schwierigkeit, ethnische Differenz durch Forschung nicht zu reifizieren – Ethnographie im Kindergarten. Pp. 78–92 in *Qualitative*

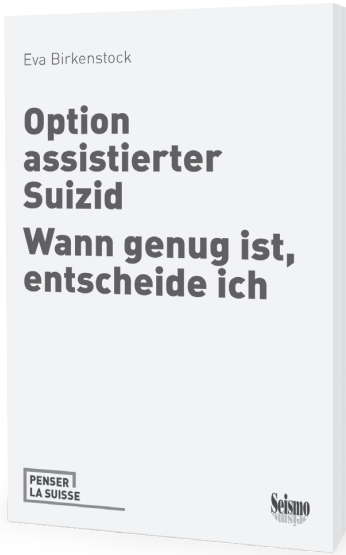
- Bildungsforschung im Elementar- und Primarbereich. Bedingungen und Kontexte kindlicher Lern- und Entwicklungsprozesse*, edited by Friederike Heinzl, and Argyro Panagiotopoulou. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren.
- Dittrich, Eckhard J., and Frank-Olaf Radtke (eds.). 1990. *Ethnizität. Wissenschaft und Minderheiten*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. 1995 [1899]. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Duemmler, Kerstin. 2015. *Symbolische Grenzen. Zur Reproduktion sozialer Ungleichheit durch ethnische und religiöse Zuschreibungen*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Duemmler, Kerstin, and Janine Dahinden. 2016. Gehören wir dazu? Grenzziehungsprozesse und Positionierungen der zweiten Generation im Vergleich zwischen Luzern und Neuenburg. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 42(2): 309–331.
- Eckert, Julia M. (ed.) 2020. *The Bureaucratic Production of Difference. Ethos and Ethics in Migration Administration*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Ellis, Kathryn. 2007. Direct Payments and Social Work Practice: The Significance of “Street-Level Bureaucracy” in Determining Eligibility. *British Journal of Social Work* 37(3): 405–422.
- Elrick, Jennifer, and Farah Schwartzmann. 2015. From Statistical Category to Social Category: Organized Politics and Official Categorizations of “Persons With a Migration Background” in Germany. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38(9): 1539–1556.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 1993. *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto.
- Epp, Charles R., Steven Maynard-Moody, and Donald Haider-Markel. 2014. *Pulled Over: How Police Stops Define Race and Citizenship*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Esser, Hartmut. 1980. *Aspekte der Wanderungssoziologie. Assimilation und Integration von Wanderern, ethnischen Gruppen und Minderheiten. Eine handlungstheoretische Analyse*. Darmstadt, Neuwied: Luchterhand.
- Eule, G. Tobias, Lisa Marie Borrelli, Annika Lindberg, and Anna Wyss. 2019. *Migrants Before the Law. Contested Migration Control in Europe*. Cham: Springer International Publishing Imprint, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Evans, Tony. 2013. Organisational Rules and Discretion in Adult Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work* 43(4): 739–758.
- Fassin, Didier. 2013. *Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing*. Cambridge/Malden: Polity Press.
- Fassin, Didier (ed.). 2015. *At the Heart of the State. The Moral World of Institutions*. London: Pluto Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 2000. Staatsphobie. Pp. 68–71 in *Gouvernementalität der Gegenwart. Studien zur Ökonomisierung des Sozialen*, edited by Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasmann, and Thomas Lemke. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Foucault, Michel. 2006. *Sicherheit, Territorium, Bevölkerung. Geschichte der Gouvernementalität I*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Fritzsche, Bettina, and Anja Tervooren. 2012. Doing Difference While Doing Ethnography. Zur Methodologie ethnographischer Untersuchungen von Differenzkategorien. Pp. 25–39 in *Feld und Theorie. Herausforderungen erziehungswissenschaftlicher Ethnographie*, edited by Barbara Friebertshäuser, Helga Kelle, Heike Boller, Sabine Bollig, Christina Huf, Antje Langer, Marion Ott and Sophia Richter. Opladen: Budrich.
- Garfinkel, Harold. 1984 [1967]. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Glazer, Nathan, and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds.). 1975. *Ethnicity. Theory and Experience*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1991. *Gefängnishefte. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. edited by Klaus Bochmann, and Wolfgang Fritz Haug. Hamburg: Paperback Argument.

- Groenemeyer, Axel. 2003. Kulturelle Differenz, ethnische Identität und die Ethnisierung von Alltagskonflikten. Ein Überblick sozialwissenschaftlicher Thematisierungen. Pp. 11–46 in *Die Ethnisierung von Alltagskonflikten*, edited by Axel Groenemeyer, and Jürgen Mansel. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Gruhlich, Julia, and Martin Seeliger (eds.). 2019. *Intersektionalität, Arbeit und Organisation*. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa.
- Hall, Stuart. 1994. *Neue Ethnizitäten. Rassismus und kulturelle Identität. Ausgewählte Schriften 2*. Hamburg: Argument Verlag.
- Hall, Stuart. 2018. *Das verhängnisvolle Dreieck. Rasse, Ethnie, Nation*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Hasenfeld, Yeheskel. 1987. Power in Social Work Practice. *Social Service Review* 61(3): 469–483.
- Hasenfeld, Yeheskel. 2010. The Attributes of Human Service Organizations. Pp. 9–32 in *Human Services as Complex Organizations*, edited by Yeheskel Hasenfeld. Sage: London.
- Heckmann, Friedrich. 1991. Ethnos, Demos und Nation oder: Woher stammt die Intoleranz des Nationalstaats gegenüber ethnischen Minderheiten? Pp. 51–78 in *Das Eigene und das Fremde. Neuer Rassismus in der Alten Welt?*, edited by Uli Bielefeld. Hamburg: Junius Verlag.
- Hirschauer, Stefan. 2014. Un/doing Differences. Die Kontingenz sozialer Zugehörigkeiten. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 43(3): 170–191.
- Hirschauer, Stefan. 2017. Humandifferenzierung. Modi und Grade sozialer Zugehörigkeit: Praktiken der Humandifferenzierung. Pp. 29–54 in *Un/doing Differences. Praktiken der Humandifferenzierung*, edited by Stefan Hirschauer. Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft.
- Hoffmann-Nowotny, Hans-Joachim, and Karl Otto Hondrich (eds.). 1982. *Ausländer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in der Schweiz. Segregation und Integration: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus.
- Howe, Christiane. 2016. Flanierende Polizeiarbeit im Quartier. *SIAC-Journal. Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und polizeiliche Praxis* 4: 29–39.
- Hupe, Peter, Michael Hill, and Aurélien Buffat. 2016. *Understanding Street-Level Bureaucracy*. Bristol: University Press.
- Imhof, Kurt. 1993. Nationalismus, Nationalstaat und Minderheiten: Zu einer Soziologie der Minoritäten. *Soziale Welt* (44)3: 327–357.
- Imhof, Kurt. 1997. Gemeinschaft in der Gesellschaft: Modernisierung und Ethnizität. Pp. 861–875 in *Differenz und Integration. Die Zukunft moderner Gesellschaften. Verhandlungen des 28. Kongresses der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Soziologie in Dresden 1996*, edited by Stefan Hradil. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus.
- Jessop, Bob. 2016. *The State. Past, Present, Future*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Jubany, Olga. 2011. Constructing Truths in a Culture of Disbelief. Understanding Asylum Screening from Within. *International Sociology* 26(1): 74–94.
- Keesing, Roger M. 1994. Theories of Culture Revisited. Pp. 301–310 in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, edited by Robert Borofsky. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kelle, Helga. 2016. Herausforderungen ethnographischer Forschung zu Pädagogik und Geschlecht. Perspektiven auf Methodologien. Pp. 3–16 in *Ethnografie – Pädagogik – Geschlecht: Projekte und Perspektiven aus der Kindheits- und Jugendforschung*, edited by Ulrike Graff, Katja Kolodzig, and Nikolas Johann. Wiesbaden: Springer VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kingsley, Donald J. 1944. *Representative Bureaucracy. An Interpretation of the British Civil Service*. Ohio: The Antioch Press.
- Koch, Martina, Esteban Piñeiro and Nathalie Pasche. 2019. «Wir sind ein Dienst, keine Behörde.» – Multiple institutionelle Logiken in einem Schweizer Jugendamt – ein ethnografisches Fallbeispiel aus der Street-Level Bureaucracy. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung FQS* 20(2), Art. 21.
- Kubisch, Sonja. 2008. *Habituelle Konstruktion sozialer Differenz. Eine rekonstruktive Studie am Beispiel von Organisationen der freien Wohlfahrtspflege*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

- Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. The Study of Boundaries Across the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:167–95.
- Lavanchy, Anne. 2013. Dissonant Alignments: The Ethics and Politics of Researching State Institutions. *Current Sociology* 61(5–6): 677–692.
- Linder, Wolf. 1998. Der ethnische Konflikt als Herausforderung demokratischer Systeme. Pp. 101–115 in *Nationalismus, Multikulturalismus und Ethnizität. Beiträge zur Deutung von sozialer und politischer Einbindung und Ausgrenzung*, edited by Hans-Rudolf Wicker. Bern: Haupt.
- Lipsky, Michael. 2010 [1980]. *Street-Level Bureaucracy. Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Maeder, Christoph and Eva Nadai. 2004. *Organisierte Armut. Sozialhilfe aus wissenssoziologischer Sicht*. Konstanz: UVK.
- Mayntz, Renate. 1985. *Soziologie der öffentlichen Verwaltung*. Heidelberg: C. F. Müller Juristische Verlag.
- Neckel, Sighard, and Ferdinand Sutterlüty. 2010. Negative Klassifikationen und ethnische Ungleichheit. Pp. 217–235 in *Ethnowissen. Soziologische Beiträge zu ethnischer Differenzierung und Migration*, edited by Marion Müller, and Darius Zifonun. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Nieswand, Boris. 2014. Über die Banalität ethnischer Differenzierungen. Pp. 271–295 in *Kultur, Gesellschaft, Migration. Die reflexive Wende in der Migrationsforschung*, edited by Boris Nieswand, and Heike Drotbohm. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Nieswand, Boris, and Heike Drotbohm (eds.) (2014). *Kultur, Gesellschaft, Migration. Die reflexive Wende in der Migrationsforschung*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Pasche, Nathalie, Esteban Piñeiro, and Martina Koch. 2018. «Wir sind die Polizei. Das Schlusswort haben wir». (Un)doing authority in einem Schweizer Polizeidienst. Pp. 41–57 in *Polizei im Spannungsfeld von Autorität, Legitimität und Kompetenz*, edited by Bernhard Frevel, and Hermann Groß. Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag für Polizeiwissenschaften.
- Piñeiro, Esteban. 2015. *Integration und Abwehr. Genealogie der schweizerischen Ausländerintegration*. Zürich: Seismo
- Piñeiro, Esteban, Martina Koch, and Nathalie Pasche. 2019. Un/Doing Ethnicity in der eingreifenden Schweizer Street-Level Bureaucracy. Ein Polizeidienst und ein Jugendamt ethnographisch im Blick. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 45(1): 35–55.
- Piñeiro, Esteban, Martina Koch, and Nathalie Pasche. 2021a. *Undoing Ethnicity im öffentlichen Dienst. Ethnografien zum ethnischen Differenzieren am Beispiel von Jugendamt und Polizei*. Zürich: Seismo.
- Piñeiro, Esteban, Nora Locher, and Nathalie Pasche. 2021b. The Art of Soft Power Banishment. New Insights into the Swiss Deportation Regime. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45(16): 28–48.
- Ray, Victor. 2019. A Theory of Racialized Organizations. *American Sociological Review* 84(1): 26–53.
- Reuter, Julia. 2002. *Ordnungen des Anderen. Zum Problem des Eigenen in der Soziologie des Fremden*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Rex, John. 1990. «Rasse» und «Ethnizität» als sozialwissenschaftliche Konzepte. Pp. 141–153 in *Ethnizität. Wissenschaft und Minderheiten*, edited by Eckhard J. Dittrich, and Frank-Olaf Radtke. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Roosens, Eugene. 1989. *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Rose, Nikolas, and Peter Miller. 1992. Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government. *The British Journal of Sociology* 43(2): 173–205.
- Said, Edward W. (1978): *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books.
- Scherschel, Karin. 2006. *Rassismus als flexible symbolische Ressource*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Schultheis, Franz, and Berthold Vogel. 2014. Einleitung. Pp. 9–18 in *Im öffentlichen Dienst. Kontrastive Stimmen aus einer Arbeitswelt im Wandel*, edited by Franz Schultheis, Berthold Vogel, and Kristina Mau. Bielefeld: transcript.

- Sharma, Aradhana, and Akhil Gupta (eds.). 2006. *The Anthropology of the State. A Reader*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Soni, Vidu. 2000. A Twenty-First-Century Reception for Diversity in the Public Sector: A Case Study. *Public Administration Review* 60(5): 395–408.
- Sowa, Jessica E. and Sally Coleman Selden. 2003. Administrative Discretion and Active Representation: An Expansion of the Theory of Soucre. *Public Administration Review* 63(6): 700–710.
- Supik, Linda. 2014. *Statistik und Rassismus. Das Dilemma der Erfassung von Ethnizität*. Frankfurt a. M.: Campus.
- Staiano, Kathryn Vance. 1980. Ethnicity as Process: The Creation of an Afro-American Identity. *Ethnicity* 7(1): 27–33.
- Touraine, Alain. 1988. *Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Postindustrial Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tschentscher, Axel. 2019. *Öffentliches Recht*. Dike: Zürich.
- Vandevoordt, Robin. 2018. Judgement and Ambivalence in Migration Work: On the (Dis)appearance of Dilemmas in Assisting Voluntary Return. *Sociology* 52(2): 282–297.
- Wagenaar, Hendrik. 2020. Discretion and Street-Level Practice. Pp. 259–277 in *Discretion and the Quest for Controlled Freedom*, edited by Tony Evans, and Peter Hupe. Cham: Springer International Publishing Imprint Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wagner, Constantin. 2016. Die Reproduktion «ethnisch» vermittelter sozialer Ungleichheit in einem Schweizerischen Sozialamt. Folgen institutioneller und akteursbezogener Kategorisierungen. Pp. 419–437 in *Symbolische Ordnung und Bildungsungleichheit in der Migrationsgesellschaft*, edited by Emre von Arslan, and Kemal Bozay. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Wagner, Constantin. 2017. *Öffentliche Institutionen als weiße Räume? Rassismusreproduktion durch ethnizierende Kategorisierungen in einem schweizerischen Sozialamt*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- Wallman, Sandra (ed.). 1979. *Ethnicity at Work*. London: The MacMillan Press.
- Weber, Max. 1980 [1921]. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Wetterer, Angelika. 2002. *Arbeitsteilung und Geschlechterkonstruktion. "Gender at Work" in theoretischer und historischer Perspektive*. Köln: Herbert von Halem.
- Wicker, Hans-Rudolf. 1997. Introduction: Theorizing Ethnicity and Nationalism. Pp 1–42 in *Rethinking Nationalism and Ethnicity. The Struggle for Meaning and Order in Europe*, edited by Hans-Rudolf Wicker. Oxford: Berg.
- Wicker, Hans-Rudolf (ed.). 1998. *Nationalismus, Multikulturalismus und Ethnizität. Beiträge zur Deutung von sozialer und politischer Einbindung und Ausgrenzung*. Bern: Haupt.
- Wicker, Hans-Rudolf, Jean-Luc Alber, Claudio Bolzman, Rosita Fibbi, Kurt Imhof, and Andreas Wimmer (eds.). 1996. *Das Fremde in der Gesellschaft: Migration, Ethnizität und Staat*. Zürich: Seismo.
- Wieviorka, Michel. 1994. Ethniciry as Action. Pp 23–29 in *Ethnic Mobilization in a Multi-Cultural Europe*, edited by John Rex (ed.), Aldershot: Avebury.
- Wimmer, Andreas. 1996. Der Appell an die Nation: Kritische Bemerkungen zu vier Erklärungen von Xenophobie und Rassismus. Pp. 173–198 in *Das Fremde in der Gesellschaft: Migration, Ethnizität und Staat*, edited by Hans-Rudolf Wicker, Jean-Luc Alber, Claudio Bolzman, Rosita Fibbi, Kurt Imhof, and Andreas Wimmer. Zürich: Seismo.
- Wimmer, Andreas. 2008. The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory. *American Journal of Sociology* 113(4): 970–1022.
- Wimmer, Andreas, and Nina Glick-Schiller. 2002. Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences. *Global Networks* (2)4: 301–334.
- Yanow, Dvora, Marleen van der Haar, and Karlijn Völke. 2016. Troubled Taxonomies and the Calculating State: Everyday Categorizing and “Race-Ethnicity” – The Netherlands Case. *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics* 1(2): 187–226.





Eva Birkenstock

---

## **Option assistierter Suizid**

### **Wann genug ist, entscheide ich**

---

ISBN 978-3-03777-259-1  
216 Seiten, 11.0 x 17.0 cm  
Fr. 19.– / Euro 17.–

### **Reihe Penser la Suisse**

Ob und unter welchen Umständen der assistierte Suizid über die rechtliche Seite hinaus auch ethisch legitim ist, wird kontrovers debattiert. Es geht um Grundthemen der Freiheit, der Selbstbestimmung, der Würde, der Lebensqualität und der Moral. Auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene besteht einerseits die Sorge, dass es einen mit der Alterung zunehmenden Druck in Richtung einer Verkürzung fragilen Lebens gibt; andererseits wird Kritik daran geäußert, dass Autoritäten den Zugang zu dem Sterbemittel beschränken.

Kern des Buches sind vierzig Gespräche mit Personen, die über ihren jeweiligen Entscheidungsfindungsprozess im Zusammenhang mit der Option eines assistierten Suizids berichtet haben. Darin kamen auch die sie dabei leitenden Werte zur Sprache. Über das Lebensende gut informiert und vorurteilsfrei kommunizieren zu können, hat sich als dringende Priorität herauskristallisiert. Betroffene wünschen sich, dass Fachpersonen ihnen egalitär begegnen und sie bei Fragen von lebensbedrohlicher Erkrankung, kognitiven Einbussen, Langzeitpflege oder Lebensmüdigkeit so unterstützen, dass ihre Werte und Bedürfnisse im Zentrum stehen. Das bedeutet, dass Berufsethik sich von autoritären Rollen verabschieden und den Individuen zuwenden sollte.

**Eva Birkenstock** wurde in Stuttgart geboren, hat Philosophie, Literaturwissenschaft und Geschichte studiert und an der FU Berlin über das Problem des Todes in der Existenzphilosophie promoviert. Im Zentrum ihrer Forschung stehen Fragen des Alterns, der Endlichkeit und Verletzlichkeit sowie der Ethik.