

## APPLICATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE WORKSHOP DIRECTORS

If you wish to apply to direct a workshop at the Joint Sessions in Münster, Germany during 22-27 March 2010, please first see the explanatory notes, then complete this form, which will serve as the **cover sheet** for your workshop proposal. This form should be sent with your **workshop proposal** to the ECPR Central Services. You can do this by emailing both documents as an attached file (in word format .doc or rich text format .rtf) to the ECPR Central Services at [ecpr@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ecpr@essex.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can print up the information and send it as a fax to the Central Services, fax: +44 1206 872500. **The deadline for applications is Sunday, 01 February 2009.**

**Title of proposed workshop:**

Category-making and public policy

**Subject area:**

Public policy, public administration, IR, gender and politics, interpretive methodologies

**Abstract of proposed workshop. Maximum of 250 words (suitable for publication in the academic programme leaflet and on the ECPR web site):**

Public policy-making involves categorization. State-defined categories, such as those used to demarcate the unemployed, disabled, the 'poor', elderly, tax-payers, youth at risk, 'African-Americans' or 'Moroccan-French', and (im)migrants, 'aliens' or refugees, define citizens' and others' entitlement to welfare provisions, unemployment benefits, voting rights, or rights of residence. Category-making is a crucial feature of policy making and a classic research topic in key areas of political science, including public policy, public administration, interpretive policy analysis, political discourse analysis, political theory, IR, and gender and politics. This proposed workshop will seek to explore the political implications and consequences of categorization by the state and examine how public policy categorization relates to processes of political inclusion and exclusion.

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**Please note that the information above is VERY important, as it will be used in all future correspondence and, if the proposal is successful, printed in the academic programme.**

The proposal should be typed with 1.5 line spacing on three/four A4 pages using this sheet as the first page, and should cover the points outlined in the explanatory notes/guidelines available on the ECPR website at [www.ecprnet.org](http://www.ecprnet.org).

For further information, please contact:

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## **Category-making and public policy**

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### **Abstract**

Public policy-making involves categorization. State-defined categories, such as those used to demarcate the unemployed, disabled, the 'poor', elderly, tax-payers, youth at risk, 'African-Americans' or 'Moroccan-French', and (im)migrants, 'aliens' or refugees, define citizens' and others' entitlement to welfare provisions, unemployment benefits, voting rights, or rights of residence. Category-making is a crucial feature of policy making and a classic research topic in key areas of political science, including public policy, public administration, interpretive policy analysis, political discourse analysis, political theory, IR, and gender and politics. This proposed workshop will seek to explore the political implications and consequences of categorization by the state and examine how public policy categorization relates to processes of political inclusion and exclusion.

### **Theoretical background and concepts**

Classification – the creation of categories and assignment of individuals or things to them – is central to political concerns and acts. Category-making is a well-founded topic within political science, where it is examined in terms of its collective or social dimensions. As Edelman put it, 'Categories are especially powerful as shapers of political beliefs...when they appear to be natural, self-evident, or simple description rather than devised...' (1995: 129). Processes of category-making in the public arena both reflect and shape collective knowledge; both aspects are mutually interactive and inextricably intertwined. Creating categories is a human activity: 'Categories are human mental constructs...we put on the world in order to help us apprehend it and live in an orderly way.... [N]ature doesn't have categories; people do' (Stone 1988: 307). When categories are created by the state, individuals' or groups' identity claims 'may be subverted—or individuals and/or groups may feel their powers of or rights to self-definition being impinged upon. State-constructed category names channel the contestation of identity' (Yanow 2003: 7). Moreover, categorizing and classifying often lead to or are undertaken for the purpose of counting, especially in the realms of scientific and state administrative endeavors. Building taxonomies—naming and counting—is one of the practices involved in doing science; and this association lends a "scientific" quality to state category-making practices.

Of particular interest to us in this workshop is the analysis of categories and category-making processes from a symbolic or meaning-focused perspective (Edelman 1964, 1977, 1995; see also Hawkesworth 1988). Category-making entails classifying a set of items according to qualities the classifier perceives in them as making them belong to one category rather than another. That is, classification is done from a particular point of view, one that is embedded in its own time and place. Symbolic or meaning-centered analysis – that undertaken from an interpretive methodological perspective (Bentz and Shapiro 1998; Klotz and Lynch 2007; Prasad 2005; Yanow 2000; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006) – seeks to establish what this point of view is, what assumptions it rests on, and what the implications of both of these are. Members of an interpretive community have the ability to and typically do group objects into similarity sets without explicitly having to ask, or needing an answer to, 'similar with respect to what?' But this is precisely what the policy analyst needs to, and does, ask in order to make these tacitly known, common sense, everyday understandings explicit.

That this is not easy is attested to by Edelman: 'Conventional categories are hard to dislodge, especially when they are parts of an integrated, mutually reinforcing network' (Edelman 1995: 145). Classification practices have also been a central concern in anthropology (e.g., Durkheim and Mauss 1903/1963; Douglas 1966, 1982/1973, 1975, 1996) and cognitive linguistics (e.g., Lakoff 1987, 1996; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Both of these areas have been drawn into political science, especially in public policy and public administration, to explore practices of category-making in various areas of political activity.

Framing the matter in terms of category-making practices highlights the questions of how and when an issue becomes a policy problem and/or how and when a group of citizens turns into a 'problem' or 'target' group. In this respect, the role of science in the policy making process, including the use of scientific labels, research reports and statistics, is particularly significant in the policy making cycle. Categorizing 'tools' for modern nation-states include population registries and censuses which provide the state with personal information about individual citizens (Kertzer and Arel 2002, Mitchell 2002, Nobles 2000, Robbin 2000b, 2000c, Sadiq 2008, Scott 1998). Rather than merely reflect these social realities, however, such instruments construct those realities: the category structures they use impose a shape on the populations so 'described' and quantified. And yet, state-defined categories are often being treated and used as *if* they were natural—already present in 'nature', rather than created by the superimposition of the category structure; their usage in research, and the usage of that research by the state in support of its policies, render their 'reality status' as *if* scientific (McHenry 2006; Yanow 2003); and both of these enable them to be presented as "stylized facts" which contribute to the construction of social realities and to state intervention (Scott 1998).

Adopting a broadly interpretive policy analysis perspective, we see categorization by the state as part of framing a policy issue (Stone 1988; Yanow 2000; Fischer and Forrester 1993) and the definition of a policy problem as an act of classification (Stone 1988; Yanow 2003). That is, we take policy making to be a continuous process of meaning-making; and these processes need to be studied through a contextualized and situated analysis of meanings constructed by various actors who are related in a web of power relationships and interests. Accordingly, "political reasoning...is primarily a reasoning of sameness and difference" (Stone 1988: 308; see also Bacchi 1999; Bowker and Star 1999, Yanow 2000, 2003).

To take an example, in the field of race/ethnic studies, scholars have pointed at the contradictory consequences of using state-defined ethnic-cultural categories and statistics to indicate social inequality, because administrative categories both identify and reinforce the differences policy makers aim to dismantle (Ghorashi 2006; Jacobs and Rea 2006; Rath 1991; Simon 2005; Yanow 2003). In the context of migration and integration policies, the Netherlands, for example, constructs collective identities on the basis of the 'ethnic background' of an individual's or parent's country of birth (i.e., identification goes back two generations). This is in contrast to other countries like the UK and the US where, depending on the specific policy or program, self-identification is also allowed. Moreover, in contemporary Dutch policy discourse, the term 'allochtoon' [allochthon in English], which entered the policy arena through the social sciences, has developed into a key policy term and statistical category to name immigrants and their descendents. Its usage, however, is not without problems, including some definitional issues, thereby adding to other elements that make 'integration' a volatile and intractable policy arena (Schön and Rein 1994). The political implications and inclusions/exclusions related to this category term may well be quite different from those associated with the French 'étranger', the German and Swiss 'Ausländer', the New Zealand 'pakeha', the UK and US 'foreigners' or 'immigrants', or even the Belgian, Austrian, and Francophone African usages of allochtoon/allochthone (Fr.) – which is an example of the kind of comparative analysis we seek to explore in this Workshop.

This workshop builds on earlier workshops conducted within ECPR Joint Sessions, notably 'Applying New Interpretive Methodologies' in Limerick, 1992 (papers from which were subsequently published as Carver and

Hyvärinen 1997), the 2001 'Policy, Discourse and Institutional Reform' and 'Identity Politics' in Grenoble, the 2005 'Metaphors in Political Science' in Granada (papers from which have recently appeared as Carver and Pikalo 2008), and the 2009 'Studying the Political through Frame Analysis'.

### **Workshop Aims**

Category-making in the political sphere has been examined extensively with regard to policies involving 'race' and 'ethnicity'. These include such topics as (im)migration policies, diversity discourses (Iverson 2007) or school desegregation (Straus 2004) in educational policies, cultural minorities in high-tech firms (Mahadevan 2007), and public library services (Robbin 2000a). The topic has also been extended to an historical analysis of these categories in pre-Norman England (Harris 2008) and the role of 'race' in French political history (Dorlin 2006).

Category-making has also been explored in the context of health policies, such as HIV/AIDS prevention (Waldby 1996; Wilton 1997; Keeler 2007) or social work practices (especially from the perspective of language use; Edelman 1977). It is central to the extensive body of research on policy-making in the area of population policies, including historical analyses of eugenic policies (see, for example, King and Hansen 1999; Broberg and Roll-Hansen 2005; Schoen 2005; Stern 2005; Mottier and Gerodetti 2007; Mottier 2008b) and contemporary policy implications of the new genetics (Kerr and Shakespeare 2002).

Finally, concerns over categorisation are central to those researching gender politics – e.g., struggles over categorization in the context of policy frameworks in the areas of prostitution where labels such as 'sex workers', 'prostitutes' or 'victims of international trafficking of women' carry important policy implications (Outshoorn 2004); child care policy, sexual harassment policies, and domestic violence (Bacchi 1999); or the policy implications of 'automatic' designation of infants as male or female in those societies that deny mixed-sex (e.g., Fausto-Sterling 2000) and the politics of sexuality (Carver and Mottier 1998; Mottier 2008a)..

This workshop intends to bring together scholars working on categorization across the spectrum of political science. This would include political scientists in the fields of public policy and public administration, public health, the politics of sexuality, and gender and politics. We are hoping to draw participants from a variety of countries in order to facilitate a comparative analysis across policy areas and nation-states. Methodologically, we welcome papers that use different research methods drawing from the broad range of interpretive methods used within political research (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006: xx), among them historical analysis, ethnographic research, discourse/textual analysis, frame analysis, semiotics, metaphor analysis, and so on.

### **Types of Papers Sought**

Against this backdrop, we welcome the following types of papers:

(1) substantive papers that explore

- particular policy examples of state categorization within a particular country;
- comparisons between or among different states' categorizing practices with respect to a single policy issue, and their implications;
- comparisons between or among different modes of categorizing (e.g., self-identification vs. other-identification), whether within a particular state or comparatively;
- comparisons between or among different policy arenas within a single state;
- the policy-research nexus – the legitimating and/or other role(s) of science in categorizing practices in political domains.

(2) methodological papers which, starting from an interpretive policy analysis perspective, examine

- the research methods through which categorization practices can usefully be studied;
- comparisons across different methods for researching categorization.

## **Anticipated participants**

This workshop is likely to attract participants from three distinct groups of researchers. First are those who have been engaging in research on categories and category-making from a policy sciences point of view, including public policy, public administration, health policy, and IR. Second, the topic may also attract those who have been engaging in category analysis from the perspectives of the politics of gender and sexuality, as well as the politics of race and ethnicity. Third, the growing group of researchers interested in and practicing interpretive methods and social constructivism in the various branches of the political sciences, such as interpretive policy analysis or political discourse analysis, is also likely to be drawn to this workshop to take up the more methodological aspects of classificatory and categorizing processes.

The following is suggestive of the kind and range of scholars who might be interested in this workshop:

Susan Ainsworth, University of Sydney, Australia

Erik Bleich, Middlebury University, US

Terrell Carver, University of Bristol, UK

Devon Curtis, University of Cambridge, UK

Elsa Dorlin, Paris-I., France

Vincent Dubois, Université Robert Schuman, Strasbourg, France

Steven Griggs, University of Birmingham, UK

Maarten Hajer, University of Amsterdam, NL

Paul de Hert, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

David Howarth, University of Essex, UK

Dirk Jacobs, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

Rebecca Keeler, Florida Atlantic University, US

Johanna Kantola, University of Helsinki, Finland

Timo Makkonen, University of Helsinki, Finland

Gerhard Maré, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Dean McHenry, Jr., Claremont College, US

Marijke Mossink, University of Amsterdam, NL

Aletta Norval, University of Essex, UK

Joyce Outshoorn, University of Leiden, NL

Julie Ringelheim, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium

Alice Robbin, Indiana University, US

Daniel Sabbagh, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, Sciences Po, France

Kamal Sadiq, University of California, Irvine, US

Ronald Schmidt, Sr., California State University, Long Beach, US

Olivier De Schutter, Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium

Lea Sgier, University of Geneva, Switzerland

Tom Shakespeare, University of Newcastle, UK

Patrick Simon, Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques, France

John Solomos, City University London, UK

Judith Squires, University of Bristol, UK

Jacob Torfing, Roskilde University, Denmark

Andy Tucker, University of Cambridge, UK

## **Funding**

Funding possibilities will be explored with the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. In addition, we will investigate the possibilities of sponsorship from the Netherlands Institute of Government (the Dutch Research School for Public Administration and Political Science) and its international network. In the past the NIG has supported Ph.D. students going to ECPR joint sessions. We will also investigate EU funding and other sources that would enable Eastern European participants to attend.

## **Co-directors**

**Véronique Mottier** holds a Professorship at the University of Lausanne and is also Director of Studies in PPS at Jesus College, Cambridge. She was Co-Convenor with Terrell Carver of the ECPR Standing Group on Political Theory (1998-2008); co-directed highly successful ECPR Workshops on Politics of Sexuality (Joint Sessions Oslo, 1996) and Identity Politics (Joint Sessions Grenoble, 2001); and directed panels on 'Gender and Politics' and 'Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Explaining Policy Change' (General Conference Kent, 2001). Her research interests centre on the areas of political discourse analysis, politics of gender, sexuality and 'race', and eugenic policymaking in welfare-state contexts. Her publications include *Sexuality: A Very Short Introduction* (OUP, 2008) and the co-edited volumes *Pflege, Stigmatisierung und Eugenik* (Seismo, 2007), *Politics of Sexuality: Identity, Gender, Citizenship* (Routledge, 1998) and *Genre et politique* (Gallimard, 2000).  
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**Marleen van der Haar** is a postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam, The Netherlands). She was a member of the organizing committee for the Methodology Workshop of the Second Interpretative Policy Analysis Conference (Amsterdam, 2007). Her current research project, in which she works together with Professor Dvora Yanow, focuses on category-making in Dutch public policy. She got her Ph.D in the Social Sciences (Utrecht University, 2007) with the dissertation *Ma(r)king differences in Dutch social work: Professional discourse and ways of relating to clients in context* (Dutch University Press, 2007). Her publications include papers in the journals *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* and *Research on Language and Social Interaction* (2008).  
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