

ADMINISTRATIVE ETHNOGRAPHY: A CALL FOR PAPERS

A collaborative workshop between the Public-Private Platform at Copenhagen Business School and the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

Outside of comparative politics, there is little ethnographic research in political science. There is even less in Public Administration. In Organization Studies, however, it is a well-established approach. This workshop will bring together these disciplines to assess critically the usefulness of the 'extended case study' in studying the public sector. The key question is 'how do things work around here'. The key method is observation. The key aim is to demonstrate not only that observational fieldwork is feasible in the public sector but also that it can deliver relevant findings.

Aronoff and Kubik (2013, 56-7 drawing on Burawoy 1998) argue that the extended case study is characterized by (1) 'situational analysis' that (2) takes 'actors' own cultural perspective seriously' and is (3) 'reflexive'. In everyday language, we invite the submission of papers that observe administrative dramas.

Observation may be the defining method in ethnography but there are many other tools: in-depth recorded interviews, focus groups, historical archives, textual analysis of official documents, biographies, memoirs and diaries, oral histories, recorded interviews, and informal conversations (see for example Shore 2000, 7-11). We welcome contributions that employ any combination of ethnographic tools.

Rhodes et al (2007) and Rhodes (2011) used the ethnographic toolkit to observe governmental elites. We will replicate these studies, but this time we focus only on public administrators irrespective of level and professional skills, covering top bureaucrats, middle-level managers, professionals, and street level bureaucrats. On this occasion, we are not studying politicians. We seek contributions from any advanced industrial democracy, not just Britain and Denmark.

When ethnography strives to be relevant, it encounters problems. Applied anthropology confronts acute dilemmas about whose aims are served by the research, who owns the research results, and individual privacy (Kedia and Van Willigen 2005, 16-20). So, a further key question is relevant for whom? The problems of the search for relevance are further compounded by the problem of time. Observation in the field is time

consuming and fits uncomfortably if at all with the demands of politicians and administrators alike. So, do we want administrative ethnography to be 'relevant' and, if so, how will we achieve this goal? We welcome contributions that engage critically with applied anthropology.

The workshop and subsequent publication will be in English. We will seek publication as either a research monograph published by Palgrave-Macmillan or as a special issue of the Journal of Organizational Ethnography.

WORKSHOP ARRANGEMENTS

The workshop will be held April 10th to 12th 2014 at Copenhagen Business School. The workshop will extend over two full days (10th and 11th) and a half day (12th). Time will be set aside for detailed comments on the submitted papers and for a general discussion of the overall workshop theme. We will meet economy travel expenses of participants within Western Europe; arrange accommodation (2 nights); provide lunch (3 days) and dinner (1 evening).

The workshop organizers are Dr. Karen Boll and Professor R. A. W. Rhodes. Proposals should be no longer than one page and should clearly indicate how they fit the workshop's remit. They should be submitted by Friday December 13th 2013 at the latest. All proposals should be sent to:

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No later than Friday January 13th 2014 the organizers will email notification letters to the authors of the accepted proposals.

Full papers should be submitted Tuesday April 1th 2014.

For further information or questions regarding the workshop, please contact Karen Boll.

SELECTED REFERENCES

Aronoff, M. J. and Kubik, J. (2013). *Anthropology and Political Science. A Convergent Approach*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Boll, K. (2013). Mapping tax compliance: Assemblages, distributed action and practices: A new way of doing tax research. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* (Online first: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2013.03.002>).

Burawoy, A. (1998). 'The Extended Case Method', *Sociological Theory* 16 (1), 4-33.

Kedia, Satish, and Willigen J. Van 2005. 'Applied Anthropology: Context for Domains of Application', in Kedia, Satish, and Willigen J. Van, (Eds.), *Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*. Westport, Conn: Praeger: 1-32.

Maynard-Moody, S., & Musheno, M. (2003). *Cops, Teachers, Counsellors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Rhodes, R. A. W., Paul 't Hart and M. Noordegraaf (Eds) (2007). *Observing Government Elites: Up Close and Personal*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Rhodes, R. A. W. (2011). *Everyday Life in British Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Shore, C. 2000. *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.