

Panel 10: Managing Diversity and the Values of Bureaucracy.

Chaired by: Sandra Groeneveld (Erasmus University Rotterdam) and Peter Leisink (Utrecht University).

Over the past decades, our societies have become increasingly diverse, and the management of diversity has become an issue for public policies as well as for organizations. This panel is interested in examining the implications of accommodating the diversity of citizens and public sector employees. It is assumed that the challenges this poses are similar, because of the common values of bureaucracy that influence both public policies and personnel policies.

The growing diversity of citizens as well as of employees goes along with calls for differentiation and allowing room for tailor-made arrangements. Within a public sector context such calls meet with the values of bureaucracy that have dominated the way in which public policies and personnel policies have been designed according to such principles as equality and standardization. Calls for differentiation and tailoring policy implementation to the individual situation of citizens and employees justify themselves by the claim that unequal cases should not be dealt with through equal measures but raise the question how the rights of citizens and employees can be guaranteed without making them dependent on the discretionary behaviour of street-level bureaucrats and supervisors.

Focusing on employees, public organizations were among the first to emphasize the importance of employing a diverse workforce that reflects the diversity of the population and argued this by referring to public values of legitimacy and social justice. This was echoed in the literature on 'representative bureaucracy' (Kingsley 1944; Long, 1952; Meier, 1975; Meier & Nigro, 1976) whose central claim was that bureaucracy should represent the society it serves. Private organizations have also begun to support the importance of a diverse workforce, but for other reasons such as attracting talented employees, servicing diverse segments of clients and improving organizational performance (Bogaert & Vloeberghs 2005; Mavis & Girling 2000), the so-called business case of diversity. This type of reasoning now seems to be taken up by public organizations as well (Groeneveld & Van de Walle, 2010).

Mapping the terrain of diversity shows that there are many topics related to the central theme of 'managing diversity'. There are descriptive and explanatory questions to be examined, and the debate also involves many normative issues.

We welcomed papers on the following topics:

* Manifestations of diversity: what is diversity actually, what kinds of diversity are important, and what does managing diversity entail?

* Management of diversity: to what extent will public policies and personnel policies that used to be characterized as standardized and collective shift to arrangements that are flexible in order to accommodate diversity of citizen and employee needs? How can street-level bureaucrats and supervisors account for their decisions when there are no standard rules to refer to?

* Outcomes of managing diversity: does management of diversity result in a workforce that is a reflection of the population? Does that lead to a higher legitimacy of public policy and/or to a public service that is better able to serve diverse clients?

The panel theme falls under the third sub-theme of the NIG research program 'Public management in a joined-up world' by focusing on management issues of public organizations that have to meet the interests and preferences of a diverse population and workforce. It is also linked to the first sub-theme 'Citizens and governance' as it addresses issues of representation.