

Call for Papers

Approaching Ethnoheterogenesis Membership, Ethnicity, and Social Change in Contemporary Societies

Organization	Prof. Dr. Mathias Bös, PD Dr. Nina Clara Tiesler, Deborah Sielert Institute of Sociology, Leibniz University of Hannover Email to: n.tiesler@ish.uni-hannover.de
Venue	Hannover; Leibnizhaus
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The study of societal change and ethnic relations has been a core pursuit in Sociology, both in the past and in the present, especially - though not exclusively - in historical contexts marked by heightened migration. This conference aims to refine the theoretical understanding of social and cultural processes regarding the formation of ethnicities and ethnic diversity (Yancey et al 1976, Bös 2010).

The specific contribution of this conference goes to the research context of migrants and migrant descendants; wherein conceptual debates on self-perceptions, modes of belonging, group formation, and collective subjectivities continue to be at the core of theoretical considerations (Cohen 1974, Glazer and Moynihan 1975, Banton 2008). Importantly, the conference also goes beyond this context: studying the genesis and continuously shifting social forms of ethnicities is heuristically important in that it can help us clarify processes of socio-, cultural-, and political change in society at large (Bell 1975, Bös 2011, Banton 2011).

Researching the emergence of ethnicities has a long tradition in diverse social sciences and in the humanities. The term ethno genesis originally described constitutive processes of ethnic groups, their possible fissions, de-ethnization, expansion, or new formations over time and space (Singer 1962, Voss 2008). From the mid-1970s onward, in American Sociology, ethno genesis was also used to grasp societal assimilation, integration, and change caused by ethnic diversification (Greeley 1974), as such describing socio-cultural change among both minority and majority groupings and in society at large.

However, it appears that current analytical concepts and frameworks to describe the genesis of ethnicities and societal change through ethnic diversification are too limited to grasp these complex and multi-dimensional formative processes (Barth 1969, Fardon 1987, Thompson 2011, Bös 2015). These concepts (e.g., assimilation, identity, integration, diversity, inclusion, multi-ethnic societies, etc.) often represent normative self-descriptions by civil society rather than analytical categories of heuristic value. Therefore, we propose the concept of Ethnoheterogenesis (EHG) as a starting point to discuss multidimensional models of specific forms of societization (Vergesellschaftung), which involve ethnic framing and affiliations of individuals, groupings, and macro groups (Tiesler 2015). Rather than reducing such formative processes to linear models, new concepts such as Ethnoheterogenesis explicitly address the dialectic of homogenization and heterogenization in the genesis of ethnicities, as well as the normality of de-ethnization and multiple options regarding ethnic affiliation (Waters 1990).

The aim of the conference is to further develop EHG or other new alternatives as analytical categories for processes of socio-cultural change in complex settings of transnationally constituted societies that can be coined ethnoheterogeneous (Claussen 2013). We invite international scholars for a critical discussion in favor of further theorizing. Conceptual papers and empirical studies referring to the following themes are welcome:

1. What changes in ethnic framing, ethnic affiliation, and multiplicity of memberships/belongings can be observed in current times of heightened mobility and how can they be analyzed?

- What can be said about ethnicity as a resource for individualization, collectivization, and community building or potential counterhegemonic cultures?
- What forms of “past presencing” can be reconstructed in the processes of ethno(hetero)genesis?
- What does the analysis of the genesis and changes of ethnic framing and multiplicity of memberships add to the broader field of sociology (i.e., Sociology of Migration, Global Sociology, and Sociology of the Nation State)?

2. How are the processes of (de-)ethnization interwoven with social inequality (economic, legal, political, etc.)?

- What role do institutions such as the family, neighborhoods, work, or communities play in this context?
- How should we think about the genesis of ethnicities in intersection with and relation to different categories of social inequality, and most importantly race, gender, class, and/or generation?

3. How does ethnicity function as an element in the structuring of (world) society?

- What can be said about the (changing) role of the nation in the emergence of ethnicities and membership roles?
- What is the role of spatial configuration, such as transnationalism, in the genesis of ethnicities?
- What insights can be gained from related fields such as diaspora or transnational studies?

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- Nadje Al-Ali, Professor, Centre for Gender Studies, SOAS

Queering Ethnoheterogenesis in transnational perspective: (De) ethnicising Muslim migrants

- Thomas D. Hall, Prof. Emeritus, Department of History, DePauw University

Ethnoheterogenesis: Insights, Questions, and Speculations from an Ancient World-Systems Perspective.

We are looking forward to proposals for lectures and/or workshops. The abstracts (one page long) should include the question, empirical/theoretical background, hypothesis, and brief personal details.

Please send your proposals or abstracts to: n.tiesler@ish.uni-hannover.de
ABSTRACTS DUE: June 15, 2017

A small contribution to the reimbursement of travel expenses is available to the speakers.