

## How do societies produce and deal with discrimination? International and intersectional comparative perspectives on labor-market related discrimination

*Call for contributions for the final conference of the project “Access plus: Access to social rights in Germany and France: inequalities and discrimination, gender and migration in the jeux d'échelles of the European space”, Sept 20-21, 2024, at the Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin*

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In the final conference of the French-German project “Access plus” we seek to address labor-market related discrimination of women and of (post-)migrants, using an international comparative perspective, with Germany and France at the centre. Starting from the observation that sociological research on discrimination is still rather scarce in Europe, we aim to explore how discrimination in the labor market and regarding access to social rights is produced, addressed, and fought against. Thereby, by comparing diverse logics of discrimination, among others intersectional ones, we seek to foreground the experiences of women and (post-)migrants, two societal ‘groups’ that still face disadvantages compared to male native labor market participants. We seek to explore these issues along three thematic lines of inquiry:

### **(i) Producing discrimination? Welfare states as co-producers of inequality – policies, rights and regulations**

Access to the labor market and to social rights and protection differs strongly between (European) welfare states, based, e.g., on general labor market conditions and social policies, but also anti-discrimination law. In “salary societies” (Castel 1995) like France and Germany, access to the welfare system strongly depends on prior contributions, through participation in the labor market. For women and (post-)migrants, in turn, this participation is influenced by family and tax policies, and immigration and integration policies, respectively. Unfair and unequal treatment concerning access to and participation in the labor market thus produces barriers to accessing social rights and protection. We hence seek to analyze the mechanisms that produce discrimination in the context of welfare state and labor market regulations. Both the structural elements of the labor market and how policies are implemented are relevant for the study of the production – but also combating – of discrimination. As labor market and welfare policies are not only influenced by national-level politics, but also by local or supranational regulations, we encourage contributions to also focus on the multiple scales along which discrimination can be produced or combated.

### **(ii) Addressing discrimination: Role of discourse, framing, categorizations**

In this section, we are interested in the discourses around discrimination, including their framing and the categorizations used by different actors. This focus allows us to better understand

differences and similarities regarding the legitimization and challenging of discriminatory and excluding practices for women and (post-)migrants. Discourses on who is deserving, based e.g. on national origin, ethno-racial imaginations and economic background, prior contributions to the welfare system, or based on ideas about the role of women/mothers and migrants in the labor market are highly consequential as they influence the formulation of public problems and related policies, as well as the actions of policy-implementing actors such as public officials responsible for attributing welfare or facilitating access to (local) labor markets.

Analyzing processes of framing and categorizations, we also intend to foreground the configurations of various dynamics, including action repertoires (as determined by political rationalities, professional knowledge and positions), structural elements (legal cultures, normative principals, institutionalized categories, or administrative procedures), as well as more conjunctural ones (collective convictions, recognition of historical elements, forms of competitive behaviors between social groups). We are particularly interested in exploring the controversies and conflicts that impact the process of framing and categorizations.

### **(iii) Enforcing non-discrimination: The relevance of legal practices and tools**

In France and Germany, as well as at the EU- level, public institutions and private organizations have developed strategies aimed at fighting discriminations. In this thematic section, we address the logics of acting and practices of coming to terms with discriminations. Different actors have different representations about the causes and mechanisms of discrimination and how to fight them, or on what grounds these causes should be denied or contested. We want to look specifically at how persons involved in the fight against discrimination – from individual to organized actors- make sense and act or react to the issues of discriminations in the context of the day-to-day activities. Thereby, we want to focus in particular on the use of law, legal principals and procedures, asking whether the application of legal instruments leads to legal change and ultimately to social transformations.

We welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions on these and related topics, including quantitative and qualitative methodologies, single case studies as well as comparative analyses. While our project starts from the comparison of these processes in France and Germany, we also invite contributions that widen our geographical focus. Please submit your proposal, including title, abstract (500 words max.) and contact details until 31.03.2024 via email to [christine.barwick-gross@uni-flensburg.de](mailto:christine.barwick-gross@uni-flensburg.de). Notifications of acceptance will be sent out until 15.04.2023.

As we plan to invite discussants and also seek to publish a collected volume with the conference papers, we expect to receive extended abstracts/presentations ten days prior to the conference date.