Call for Papers

The Role of Civil Servants

Public organisations in the 21st century are increasingly complex in terms of multiple institutional rules, norms and practices, making definition of appropriate identities, roles and relationships a difficult challenge for civil servants. In this call for papers, we wish to draw attention to the roles of civil servants within increasingly complex public sector organisations.

Suggested, although not exclusive, research questions to be addressed in the special issue are:

- What is the nature of public administration taking into account increasing institutional complexity in terms of persistent bureaucratic traditions, new public management solutions, participatory ideals, activist sentiments among officials etc.?
- What are the consequences of this institutional complexity for the possibility of preserving a coherent, rule-governed public administration, and what does public mean in public administration today?
- What types of roles are civil servants playing in relation to different institutional rules and norms and various categories of actor (politicians, citizens, organisations), and how do they manage frictions and conflicts?
- What types of conceptions of the role of civil servants are developing, including public service ethics? What alternative and contending role conceptions and ethics are prevalent and supported?

We welcome empirical, theoretical, and conceptual papers related to these questions, where the focus could be on transnational, governmental, regional or local levels. Papers should reflect on the Scandinavian context, thus include a discussion of how key findings relate to civil service within the Scandinavian countries. A letter registering an interest in participating in the special issue together with an abstract (250-300 words) of the proposed paper should be sent to the guest editors by March 1st 2017. All papers will be subject to regular double-blind peer review. Deadline for submission of full paper: June 30th 2017.

Contacts for further information or queries with respect to the special issue:
Tom S. Karlsson, Assistant Professor in Public administration, School of Public Administration, University of Gothenburg; tom.karlsson@spa.gu.se
Jan Olsson, Professor in Political Science, Örebro University; jan.olsson@oru.s