



Resistance to Racial Equity in U.S. Federalism and its Impact on Fragmented Regions

Adriano Udani, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

Questions about federalism feel newly discovered after each major national crisis. Yet, we also feel that questions concerning race and racism, especially in public administration, do not receive the same rebirth. The inattention of race and racism in public administration scholarship has received much attention (Alexander, 1997; Witt, 2006; Stivers, 2007). Scholars have defined racism as an illusory ideological system of beliefs that maintain structures of social oppression (Shelby, 2002; Stivers, 2006). Racism also does not require racist actors, and can exist in systems and culture as well as with individuals, both unconsciously and consciously (powell et al., 2006). Policymakers and public administrators are certainly not above racist motivations and decisions. Some have shown how they use their privilege to mask malicious administrative intent (Adams & Balfour, 2004) while others have brought more attention to how administrators can rearticulate their decisions by publicly renouncing the exercise of discretion in favor of adhering to the letter of the law. As Camilla Stivers (2007) argued forcefully, “administrative practices can be infected with racism even though individual administrators do not bear conscious animus toward people of color. In this respect, racism, like administrative evil, is masked.”