

Value conflicts in a differentiated Europe: The impact of digital media on value polarisation in Europe (ValCon)

Initiative: Herausforderungen für Europa

Bewilligung: 03.12.2019

Laufzeit: 3 Jahre

Projekt-Website: <https://www.uni-flensburg.de/valcon/de/>

The aim of the project is to explain the growing tendency in and across Europe to contest the core values that anchor the European project, and clarify how this new trend relates to digital media usage. At a broader level, it addresses the challenges posed by a deep crisis of liberal democracy in Europe and the world. The study asks the core question: to what extent can value conflicts, as expressed in polarized opinions and extremist political views among the public, be attributed to patterns of social media communication? Is the EU as a community of value drifting apart? And if so, how is this "drifting apart" related to the erosion of value consensus at national level? The project addresses two major challenges to European societies today: digital media's increasing contribution to political polarization, and the emergence of new social cleavages within and across European societies. The project's main hypothesis is that one key factor to explain these social cleavages within European societies lies in a mediatized logic of value contestation. It designs an innovative research methodology that bridges the fields of media framing and reception studies. The mediatization perspective helps to understand how value conflicts are not only channeled through the media, but also constituted by the media. The team of researchers from Germany, Spain and Denmark will use its multidisciplinary expertise to develop a sound theoretical framework on a broad empirical basis. The study combines public opinion surveys and media content analysis for three core value conflicts (freedom of speech; independence of judiciary; gender equality) in six EU member states (Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and Spain). The output generated by the project will enhance the ability of EU- and national government institutions to meet important challenges in political communication as well as of practitioners in media and education to critically assess the usage and influence of digital and social media.

Projektbeteiligte

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Open Access-Publikationen

Same same but different? Gender politics and (trans-)national value contestation in Europe on Twitter (Forthcoming journal article)

COVID-19 related social media use and attitudes towards pandemic control measures in Europe.