

Sensing 'race', whiteness and the nation: sonic and olfactory experiments through text and spaces of Berlin

Initiative: Aufbruch - Neue Forschungsräume für die Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften

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'Race' and processes of racialization have long been denied as relevant phenomenon in Europe. Yet through the Black Lives Matter movement, de-colonial initiatives, and debates around xenophobia, issues of racism, whiteness and multiculturalism have entered mainstream discourse. Despite the censure of 'race', processes of racialization continue - discursively, but also through non-verbal sensory phenomenon. This project will open new research frontiers in cultural studies by exploring how 'race' is produced through the sonic, olfactory and spatial by mobilising a novel methodological approach. Space and the senses are seldom explicitly employed to understand how processes of racialisation and the concomitant struggle to belong operates; omitting these affective dimensions of boundary drawing limits how we can theorise and understand these phenomena. This exploratory project interdisciplinary combines geographical, urban, postcolonial and migration studies and methods to a.) spatialise key texts in the German critical 'race' and whiteness studies canon using interactive graphic maps that span local, national and international scales; and b.) experiment with sensory participatory walking methodologies in Berlin's Wedding district to highlight the role of the spatial, sonic and olfactory in 'race'-making processes. This will reveal innovative ways to approach and theorise racialisation, whiteness and multiculturalism in Germany.

Projektbeteiligte

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