

Cultures of Rejection: Conditions of Acceptability in Socio-Spatial and Digital Environments in Contemporary Europe [CURE]

Initiative: Herausforderungen für Europa

Bewilligung: 03.07.2018

Laufzeit: 3 Jahre

The project aims at generating a deeper understanding of processes of social polarization, radicalization, and transformation of everyday life that underpin recent surges in nationalism and right-wing populism in Europe. These processes are termed "cultures of rejection": Practices, discourses, and cultural formations based on values, norms, and affects which reject immigration, domestic political elites, institutions of civil society and the media, shifting gender relations, and European integration. The working hypothesis posits that cultures of rejection emerge from experiences of change and crisis, and fuel rejection of both the EU and national democratic systems as well as institutions of civil society, threatening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. The project seeks to test this hypothesis and to analyze which dimensions of transformation and crisis are processed in cultures of rejection, and how meaning is ascribed to them intersubjectively in different environments. At its core, the project asks: (1) how do workers in two industries affected by economic and technological transformation (logistics/transport and retail) reproduce, justify, or contradict cultures of rejection in their everyday lives? (2) To which experiences of routines, transformation, and crisis do employees ascribe meaning via reference to cultures of rejection? (3) Which online and offline environments are relevant to their reproduction? (4) What similarities and differences can account for the composition of cultures of rejection in different spaces and places? Such cultures are investigated empirically across a transnational European space in Sweden, Germany, Austria, Croatia, and Serbia, and on three levels: The workplace, digital environments, and social-spatial environments innovatively combining social and cultural research with ethnological methods in both online and offline environments.

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