CULTURES OF REJECTION

PRACTICES, DISCOURSES AND CULTURAL FORMATIONS IN POLARIZED SOCIETIES
27 - 29 JUNE 2022

Location: Dorćol Platz, 11000, Dobračina 59, Beograd, Serbia
https://goo.gl/maps/4CwpRu7Tg9fSiJXo7

Recent years suggest that the 21st century is characterized by a continuous »multiple crisis« that impacts many dimensions of our collective, social reproduction. Among them are growing precariousness and social stagnation, eroding welfare regimes and declining trust in European institutions. At the same time, socio-technological transformations fundamentally reorganize labor processes, reproductive life and the political landscape. The global Covid-19 pandemic has created new social upheavals and the war in Ukraine has prompted millions to search for refuge and safety. At the same time, past conflicts persist. Violence in the Middle still leads various populations to look for a better life in Western Europe. »The migrant crisis« appears to have turned into a permanent state.

All these developments have influenced the rise of new and old political actors which build their programs on ideas of ethnic, racial or national purity, draw on an algorithmic public sphere and seek to mobilize emotions of insecurity and deprivation. A »Culture of Rejection« offers orientation amidst upheavals by rejecting immigration, political elites, civil society institutions, the media, shifting gender relations, and European integration. The consequent resurgence of nationalism and right-wing populism points to deeper processes of polarization, radicalization and transformation of everyday life. Counteracting an authoritarian drift involves tackling these socio-cultural conditions.

In »Cultures of Rejection in Europe: Conditions of acceptability in socio-spatial and digital environments« funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, we investigate of practices, discourses and cultural formations that provide orientation in changing lifeworld's by recourse to »Cultures of Rejection«. From the 27th to the 29th of June 2022, we are inviting scholars to Belgrade, to take stock of the social, political and cultural conditions under which these developments take place.

SCHEDULE

Monday, 27 June | Community Center Dorćol Platz

18:00-20:00   **Film Screening »How Right Wing Politics are made acceptable in Europe today«**
Chair: Gazela Pudar Draško (University of Belgrade)

Commentary by Đurđa Trajković (University of Belgrade), Sonja Stojanović Gajić (Belgrade Centre for Security Policy), Srđan Đurović (Fund for Open Society Serbia).

Tuesday, 28 June | Community Center Dorćol Platz

9.00-9:45   **Setting the Scene of »Cultures of Rejection«**
Opening Presentation by Manuela Bojadžijev (Humboldt-University Berlin) and Gazela Pudar Draško

10:00-12:30   **Session 1: Migration and Borders after 2015**
Chair: Manuela Bojadžijev

10:00-10:45   **»Getting the Macroeconomics of Migration Right, or Why Refugees Are Not Fiscal Burdens«**
Presentation by Peo Hansen (Linköping University)

10:45-11:45   **»Seven Years Later. Old Routes and New Patterns of Contested Mobility in South-Eastern Europe«**
Roundtable with Barbara Beznec (Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts) Andrej Kurnik (University of Ljubljana), Marta Stojić Mitrović (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Chair: Bernd Kasparek (Humboldt-University Berlin)

11:45-12:30   Commentary by Manuela Bojadžijev, and Discussion

12:30-14:00   **Lunch + Coffee**

14:00-16:00   **Session 2: Conjunctures of Right-Wing Politics**
Chair: Benjamin Opratko (University of Vienna)

14:00-14:45   **»Populism and Political Immediacy in Germany and Beyond«**
Presentation by Nitzan Shoshan (University of Mexico)

14:45-15:30   **»Where Does Post-Modern Conservatism Fit Within the Reactionary Tradition?«**
*Presentation by Matthew McManus (University of Calgary***)**

15.30-16:00   Commentary by Gazela Pudar Draško and Discussion

Evening Event (TBA): Neighborhood Tour and Public Panel

9:30 - 13:00   **Session 3: Infrastructures of Rejection**
Chair: Manuel Liebig (University of Vienna)

09:30-10:15   **»The Labour of Trolling: Rent, Platforms, and Fake News«**
Presentation by Fabio Mattioli (University of Melbourne)

10:15-11:00   **»Covid-19 and the Geographies of the Far Right in Germany”**
Presentation by Daniel Mullis (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt) and Paul Zschocke (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt)

11:00-11:15   Coffee-Break

11:15-12:15   **»Cultures of Rejection in the Covid-Crisis«**
Roundtable with Celina Ortega Soto (Linköping University), Milan Urošević (University of Belgrade), Marko-Luka Zubčić (University of Rijeka), Alexander Harder (Humboldt-University Berlin) Manuel Liebig, Benjamin Opratko. Chair: Daniel Mullis

12:15-13:00   Commentary by Birgit Sauer (University of Vienna) and Discussion.

13:00-13:45   Lunch-Break

13.45-15:30   **Closing Session: »Cultures against Rejection«**
Chair: Stefan Jonsson (Linköping University)

13:45-14:30   **»Rejecting Rejection, Shifting Embodiments, Shaping Alliances«**
Presentation by Nacira Guénif (University Paris 8 Vincennes - Saint-Denis)

14:30 - 15:30   **Closing Remarks by Convenors**

LIST OF ABSTRACTS

Session 1: Migration and Borders after 2015

What has happened since the »long summer of migration«? In this session we will consider the specifics of migration in transit countries and its complex relationship to the constitution of European borders. We also want to investigate the developments that followed the migration movements in 2015, including the re-stabilization of European migration and border regimes, transnational and domestic political and legal decisions regarding asylum, citizenship and democratic participation, as well as the emergence of solidarity and anti-migrant movements.

»Getting the Macroeconomics of Migration Right, or Why Refugees Are Not Fiscal Burdens«

Peo Hansen, Ph.D. Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society (REMESO), Linköping University

Today both researchers and policy-makers agree that refugees admitted to the European Union constitute a net cost and fiscal burden for the receiving societies. As is often claimed, there is a trade-off between refugee migration and the fiscal sustainability of the welfare state. In this talk, Peo Hansen shows that this consensual cost-perspective on migration is built on a flawed economic conception of the orthodox "sound finance" doctrine. By shifting perspective to examine migration through the macroeconomic lens offered by Modern Monetary Theory, Hansen is able to demonstrate sound finance's detrimental impact on migration policy and research. Most importantly, this undertaking offers the tools with which both migration policy and migration research could be modernized and put on a realistic footing. Empirically, the lecture brings these tools to bear on the case of Sweden, the country that, proportionally speaking, has received the most refugees in the EU over the years while also having one of the most comprehensive welfare states in the EU.The talk builds on Peo Hansen's new book: *A Modern Migration Theory: An Alternative Economic Approach to Failed EU Policy* (Agenda Publishing, 2021).

Session 2: Conjunctures of Right-Wing Politics

After a decade marked both by a strengthening of far-right politics and a proliferation of research into right-wing populism, where do we stand? In this session, we will not only investigate what potentially new themes and actors emerged in the last years, but also to discuss how we can investigate this phenomenon with contemporary theoretical and methodological frameworks.

»Populism and Political Immediacy in Germany and Beyond«

Nitzan Shoshan, Ph.D., Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, El Colegio de México

Drawing on ongoing fieldwork in the Brandenburg countryside, where the far-right Alternative for Germany party scored unprecedented success, this talk traces the shared currents that background the political rise and consolidation of a populist far right. Observers have noted how emergent antagonisms have reshaped political fault lines in the Federal Republic in recent years. The significance for the rise of populist nationalism of seemingly pervasive, commonsensical tropes in the political discourse of multiple voices across political affiliations, however, has received far less scholarly attention. Through an ethnographic inquiry into the social life of Heimat—a concept that has witnessed a veritable renaissance in contemporary Germany—this talk elaborates three analytical heuristics for thinking about the populist present elsewhere as well: first, the notion of immediacy, understood as an object of desire, a promise, as well as valuable political capital; second, the concept of residuality, viewed as the discursive attribution

of both historical out-of-placeness and marginality with respect to present hegemonic orders; and, third, ideologies of difference, and especially of essentialized gendered and racialized distinctions.

"Where Does Post-Modern Conservatism Fit Within the Reactionary Tradition?"
Matthew McManus, Ph.D., University of Calgary

This presentation locates the root of the various populist and reactionary movements that have swept the globe since 2016 to the impact of post-modern. McManus argues that the dissolution of the traditional sources of the self and hierarchies which conservatives venerated under the pressures of neoliberalization created the conditions for successful revanchist politics on the right to re-emerge. Albeit one very much stamped by the post-modern ethos and aesthetic of the era.

Session 3: Infrastructures of Rejection
How do digital infrastructures come to bear on the political developments of the current moment? Social media, and the new communicative environments it offers, fundamentally impact public discourse and opinion formation across Europe. Especially during the Covid-19 crisis, these digital communication technologies became a basis for protest movements against the pandemic responses ushered in by governments and health officials. This session investigates these digital infrastructures, and analyzes key features of the new movements that arose during the pandemic from an international, comparative perspective.

"The Labour of Trolling: Rent, Platforms, and Fake News"
Fabio Mattioli, Ph.D., Anthropology, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne.

Since the 2016 US presidential election, social scientists have understood the phenomenon of fake news either as a consequence of the crisis of traditional media or as part of a campaign launched by foreign powers (i.e. Russia, China) to influence democratic life in (Western) countries. However, early ethnographic data suggests that a significant portion of the disinformation that circulates online is created by common citizens (trolls) who repurpose social media and online platforms to extract profit. This contribution offers some preliminary insights to theorize fake news as an economic phenomenon. Specifically, Mattioli explores the labour that Trolls deploy to monetize fake news. Overall, he argues that Troll's activities are key to understand the rentier dynamics at the heart of platform capitalism.

"Covid-19 and the Geographies of the Far Right in Germany"
Daniel Mullis, Ph.D. and Paul Zschocke, M.A., Leibniz-Institut Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung

The rise of regressive politics is not new in Germany. With the far-right mass protests of PEGIDA and the rise of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), right-wing extremism has practically reached the center of society. At the attitudinal level, the anchoring of far-right attitudes in the middle of society has long been emphasized. In their contribution, Mullis and Zschoke discuss the overlapping geographies of the far right and Covid-19 cases, the social polarization in the wake of Covid-19, and the historical path dependencies that have led to it.

Closing Session: Cultures against Rejection

After delineating those conditions that make »Cultures of Rejection« acceptable, what conditions, practices and context might serve to foster a counter-culture against rejection? The closing session will discuss practical and conceptual venues for something akin to »Cultures against Rejection«, taking stock of existing initiatives but also looking at new visions of collectively living together.

»Rejecting Rejection, Shifting Embodiments, Shaping Alliances«
Nacira Guénif, , Ph.D., University Paris 8 Vincennes - Saint-Denis

TBA