
Politicization of Society and Public Controversies

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The research team in this area focuses on varieties of the politicization of current societies. In sociology this general process has been identified since the collapse of communist regimes at the latest. It is related to a gradual erosion of the tried out institutions of industrial modernity such as a social class, expert knowledge, modern city, and nation state-based democracy. Due to the interlinked influences of economic globalization, cultural amalgamation, and technological change, the very social structure of democratic societies has been undergoing a fundamental transformation resulting in new conflict lines between the winners and losers of these processes. The result is the return of political conflict to many spheres of society.

In politics so-called losers of globalization constitute a new constituency for populist forces, which form to stop further international integration and globalization. There are new parties and movements being organized around the issues of political integration, migration, and sovereignty. Some of these mobilizations have already managed to produce spectacular and controversial results, such as Brexit and the yellow vests movement in France. There have been many radical and populist movements and parties established in Central Eastern Europe too, the Czech Republic included. The 2015 migrant crisis constituted an additional factor in the transformation of politics in Europe, which determined new patterns of civic engagement and political participation. These changes can be seen not only on the levels of national and international politics, but also in urban spaces.

However, these processes are not limited to party and protest politics. They are manifested in the politicization of previously seemingly non-political issues and spheres such as health care (for example contentious debates on vaccination and early childcare), sport, and urban planning. These are being studied on the level of collective actors involved in the new controversies, as well as on the level of general public opinion. Both traditional tools of social research and new media-based tools of digital sociology are currently employed.

At the Faculty of Social Sciences these particular research topics are developed by the faculty members, as well as by research fellows and doctoral students. These topics, as they are developed at the Faculty of Social Sciences, well relate to research priorities of other faculties. As a result, this research area will serve as an important focal point for future deeper collaboration and research development of sociology departments at Charles University. The research in this area is informed by the plurality of epistemological and methodological approaches, including inspirations from social anthropology.

Selected outputs

- BLOKKER, P. (Ed.). (2017). Constitutional acceleration within the European Union and beyond. Abingdon: Routledge.
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- JEŘÁBEK, H. (2017). Paul Lazarsfeld and the Origins of Communications Research. London: Routledge.
- KRASE, J., & UHEREK, Z. (Eds.). (2017). Diversity and Local Contexts: Urban Space, Borders, and Migration. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- LINEK, L., CÍSAŘ, O., PETRÚŠEK, I., & VRÁBLÍKOVÁ, K. (2018) Občanství a politická participace v České republice. Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství.
- NUMERATO, D. (2018) Football Fans, Activism and Social Change. Abingdon: Routledge.