

Research Section "Sociology of European Integration" of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie

Call for Papers: European Di-Visions. Political, normative and social tensions within the EU for the 2020 Congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie (DGS) to be held at TU Berlin, September 14 – 18, 2020

Stefanie Börner, Monika Eig Müller, Christian Schmidt-Wellenburg. During the last decade, several transnational crises – such as “financial cum economic crisis” or “migration crisis” – have called the processes of European political and social integration into question. The panel wants to trace the EU-wide tensions accruing from these challenges, investigate how they alter existing conflict lines and discuss solutions advocated by different proponents as well as possible effects. Recent developments touch differently upon the various dimensions of the European integration. At the political level, existing supra- and international cooperation (e.g. in migration or economic policies) has not only been ripe with conflict in itself but has stood in constant competition with more national forms of corporation. This politicization seriously challenges the permissive consensus that European elites used to rely on. Solutions emphasising national sovereignty – such as “Brexit” – seem in the end to deepen crisis and feelings of political powerlessness on a national as well as on a European level. Likewise, visions of (re-)nationalisation can be observed in many member states with possibly similar contradictory effects. In normative terms, these populist politics of fear discredit the idea of a liberal Europe with transnational rights. As a social consequence, economic and political divisions within the EU may again increase. Arising conflicts do not only affect the process of European integration in general and its normative orientations, but also the activities of civil society and social movements as well as citizens' wellbeing and attitudes at the micro level. In a situation, where supranational visions and divisions are challenged on basic terms, the panel invites to scrutinize the flaws and potentials in the EU's architecture, pending reforms and possible redirections. The panel aims at studying the dialectic of European dis*integration: the actors pushing these developments (e.g. supranational elites, transnational organisations and European citizens) and the respective counter movements (ranging from national political actors to national and transnational civil society and social movements). In how far do EU-wide conflict lines differ from conflicts occurring at the national level? Are humanitarian and cosmopolitan values compatible? What is the role of social movements? How do conflict lines interact with each other and do they affect and challenge the professional work within the European Commission? How does the perception of European divides differ between member states and different social groups? We invite researchers from different sociological fields (e.g. migration, social movements, transnational rights, right-wing populism, social inequality and social policy, horizontal Europeanisation etc.) to shed light on these conflicts from a macro, meso, or micro sociological perspective, provide sociological interpretations and explanations of the various conflicts at hand and study their consequences empirically.

We look forward to original empirical or conceptual contributions. Please submit abstracts of a maximum of 500 words to stefanie.boerner@ovgu.de by 15.05.2020.