

Leipzig University

Leibniz ScienceCampus „Eastern Europe – Global Area“ (EEGA)

Center for the Study on Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy at Leipzig University

Call for Papers „Islamophobia in Eastern Europe – Theoretical Implications and Empirical Findings“, 3rd until 4th of November 2017 in Leipzig

The so-called "refugee crisis" has made clear that derogatory attitudes towards Islam and Muslims are very common in some Eastern European countries and even lead to political demands that are incompatible with the democratic requirement of religious freedom and EU anti-discrimination rules. With the increasing migration of Muslims against the background of globalization and conflicts in the Middle East, and the threat perceived by the Christian or non-religious majority population, the peaceful coexistence of people of different cultures and religions is in danger.

There are quite a few examples that show such a threat: especially in Hungary the rejection of Islam and Muslim immigrants is loudly expressed. The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán wishes no people from different cultures in his country and obviously means Muslims. The Czech President Miloš Zeman is even more clear saying that he does not want immigration of Muslims into his country. Poland would only like to accept Christian refugees into the country; in addition, there are reports of attacks on Islamic institutions. The extent of Islamophobia in Eastern Europe is also illustrated by population surveys. The results of some quantitative surveys on attitudes towards Islam and Muslims (also already before the so – called refugee crisis) show that the extent of Islamophobia in the population of some Eastern European countries is significantly higher than in Western Europe (e.g. Barakly /Hafez 2015; Stokes 2015; Yendell 2013; FES 2011), even though the share of Muslims in the population is significantly lower than in West European immigration countries.

A look at social media like Facebook reveals that anti-Islamist sites are very popular in Eastern European countries. So it is no surprise that not only right-wing extremist and right-wing populist parties and movements, but also other national and openly Islamophobic movements are experiencing a boom through the perceived threat of Islam, both in their core program and as part of their general xenophobic orientation (e.g. in Poland PEGIDA Poland, Polish Defense League, ONR; in the Czech Republic Úsvit, in Romania: Noua Dreapta, in Croatia Ustaše, etc.).

There is still a considerable research gap regarding Islamophobia in Eastern Europe. This applies both to the knowledge of universal theories, for example, from sociology and social psychology as well as empirical robust material from quantitative and qualitative social research.

Against this background the workshop aims to address the following questions:

- 1.) What forms and manifestations of Islamophobia exist in Eastern European countries at the level of attitudes, behaviors, media and political contexts?
- 2.) How has Islamophobia developed historically in Eastern Europe?
- 3.) Which theories at the micro-, meso- and macro-social level explain Islamophobia in Eastern Europe?

In the abstract (1 - 2 pages), the applicants are invited to clarify the research questions in their paper, the theories they use, and the results of which empirical research they will discuss.

The contributors are also asked to publish a short summary of their paper online after the workshop (max 8 pages).

The submission deadline is the 15th of August 2017. Approved contributors can have their travel expenses reimbursed up to 350 Euros by Leibniz-ScienceCampus „Eastern Europe - Global Area“ (EEGA).

Please submit your abstract to alexander.yendell@uni-leipzig.de.

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