

DIE BEDEUTUNG POLITISCHER KULTURMUSTER IM EUROPÄISCHEN ERWEITERUNGSPROZESS

CULTURAL PATTERNS OF THE EUROPEAN ENLARGEMENT PROCESS (CULTPAT)

The comparative study, including two EU members, one associated and several applicant countries, completed by cross-country problem-oriented case studies, is based on a qualitative, trans-disciplinary social science approach, combining analytical skills from the fields of contemporary anthropology, political science and history of ideas. The research project aims to reconstruct the cultural patterns of identity constructions on a local/regional, national and European level since „1989/90“, used as frames for political orientation by various actors of the enlargement process.

Special attention is drawn to these fields of political discourse and policy making, which are perceived through conflicting representations on the said levels and as a potential danger posed by or to the enlargement process.

The multi-dimensional analysis is based on a trans-disciplinary methodological approach - combining analytical skills of contemporary anthropology, political science and history - to the ongoing redefinition of regional, national and European identity concepts in the enlargement process. Using that methodological approach, and given the scientific background of the research teams and their (cooperation-related) experiences in similar fields, the references that policy making and political discourse make to various cultural backgrounds may be followed, thus allowing for a description of the construction of underlying cultural patterns.

The comparative study focuses on the period after the changes of the European political landscape in the wake of „1989/90“, particularly on the Central European region, closely affected by these political changes: country studies include EU-members, applicant countries in different stages of negotiation and one associated country as well as European institutions, and are completed by cross-country problem oriented case-studies (around the notions of territory and memory).

The aims of the project are to reconstruct the influence of conflicting and competing cultural patterns framing the enlargement process as points of reference in political discourse and policy making on a local/regional, national and European level; to identify problematic fields of political debate perceived as a danger arising through or in this process, as well as concomitant perceptions at the level of these references as an orientation for various political actors.

Leading questions of the project therefore follow cultural factors in the formation of identities of the New Europe on a local/regional, national and European level.

