

Description of the planned dissertation project – Stephanie Schmidt

Policing in anger: An ethnography of anger in the everyday life of policemen.

The dissertation deals with **emotional practices of anger** in the context of the everyday life of police officers. Anger as an emotion is a permanent structure of our experience (Solomon 1981, 241) and not (only) a singular, eruption-like event. The function of an emotion is to dramatize oneself and one's world and to give meaning to what we would call "objectively" just a "fact". (Solomon 1981, 243) Emotions, following Bourdieu, are practices and can be seen "as the product of a meaningful intersection of socially situated concepts and bodies." (Scheer 2012, 213) These practices are embedded in cultural norms, and they also act as a mediator of the social context.

Even with the police, which has raised 'being non-emotional' as a guideline, emotions are very important for interactions. Expressions of compassion, dismay, concern and shock by police officers in situations, such as the death of infants, are widely accepted within society. Other expressions, especially those of anger, are often rejected as unjustified. Nevertheless, they take place.

Anger also includes moral categories, terms of injury as well as guilt and the justification to be in the position of the prosecutor. Because of their position as an institution of violence and power, the policemen are in principle able to enforce this indictment directly and executively. (Collins 2011) But rarely does anger turn into violence. Much more often, anger is communicated and embedded in narratives that speak of ethics, law, guilt, punishment, responsibility and the like. Through this, and through effervescence, a community emerges that has a shared idea of what is considered the "unbearably embarrassing one." (Landweer 2016) These shared ideas also lead to practices against those perceived as non-legitimate rage of others. These practices are often used against people in a weak position. Based on a sanction function, which is inherent in anger (von Scheve 2011), practices of policing are also geared towards these people and assign them their place in the social order. Thus, police practices contribute not insignificantly to the (re) -production of social inequality. My Dissertation deals with these narratives and practices and the idea of exclusion and inclusion through anger.

The **methodological approach** of the dissertation is an ethnographic study, which was carried out over a period of almost 3 years in the field of the police. After a pretest in the Schutzpolizei in Frankfurt am Main, I have to accompany a riot police in Thuringia on demonstration events and soccer games. Then I am cruising with the patrols in Berlin-Neukölln. As a data basis, I use field observations, background discussions and different field materials, such as forms, parliamentary inquiries, police orders and committee minutes. I also use more than 20 individual interviews with state criminal police officers (LKA), three group discussions and interviews with police officers of the riot police. Supporting this data core there are more than 10 interviews with police officers (including the Special Operational Units (SEK)), which were collected as part of a research project for the preparation of the G20 in Hamburg 2017.

The project started in 2013, and I am expecting to **complete it by end of 2019**.

The **project** is being conducted within the Department of History and European Ethnology, under the supervision of Prof. Silke Meyer.

Literature

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