

Abstract

Migration in EU welfare states has become a source for social conflict about conditions of in- and exclusion. Particularly since the implementation of EU citizenship, the concept of national membership is in dispute. Scholars have therefore returned to investigate legal and political implications of citizenship in the EU in the face of increasing migration flows and reinvigorated right-wing sentiments.

Yet, the question of how people themselves contest citizenship in relation to migration in the EU has received less attention. Therefore, this thesis sets out to empirically investigate a 'bottom-up' approach to citizenship contestation according to people's views of their relationship with political authorities as well as concerning questions of how to organise just social interaction among each other. Here, the thesis argues that online media allow people to constitute themselves as political subjects regarding migration. The thesis then identifies two separate and distinct forms of contestation: commenting on national news media websites among critics of immigration and participation in Facebook 'expat' groups among EU mobiles.

In order to understand how critics of immigration contest citizenship, the thesis conducts an inductive comments analysis and compares them across German and Danish online news sites. Regarding EU mobiles' citizenship contestation, it draws from two online surveys distributed in Facebook groups and analyses and compares semi-structured interviews with EU mobiles living in Denmark and Germany.

The findings of the thesis shed light on the connection between people's perceptions of migration and their demands toward political authorities. These findings raise questions regarding the meaning of membership in the EU and suggest that ordinary people challenge the legitimacy of political representation within the framework of the nation-state.